PREVIEW OF IAN FRAZIER'S "FAMILY"/THE FILMS OF SATYAJIT RAY

The Atlantic Monthly
OCTOBER 1994

The Failure of Sex Education

There is little evidence that it works — teenage pregnancy is up and so is the incidence of sexually transmitted disease. It is a gumbo of ideas based on no known field of knowledge. And, though its proponents boast of their "realism," it does not speak to the reality of "the new sexual revolution" among the young

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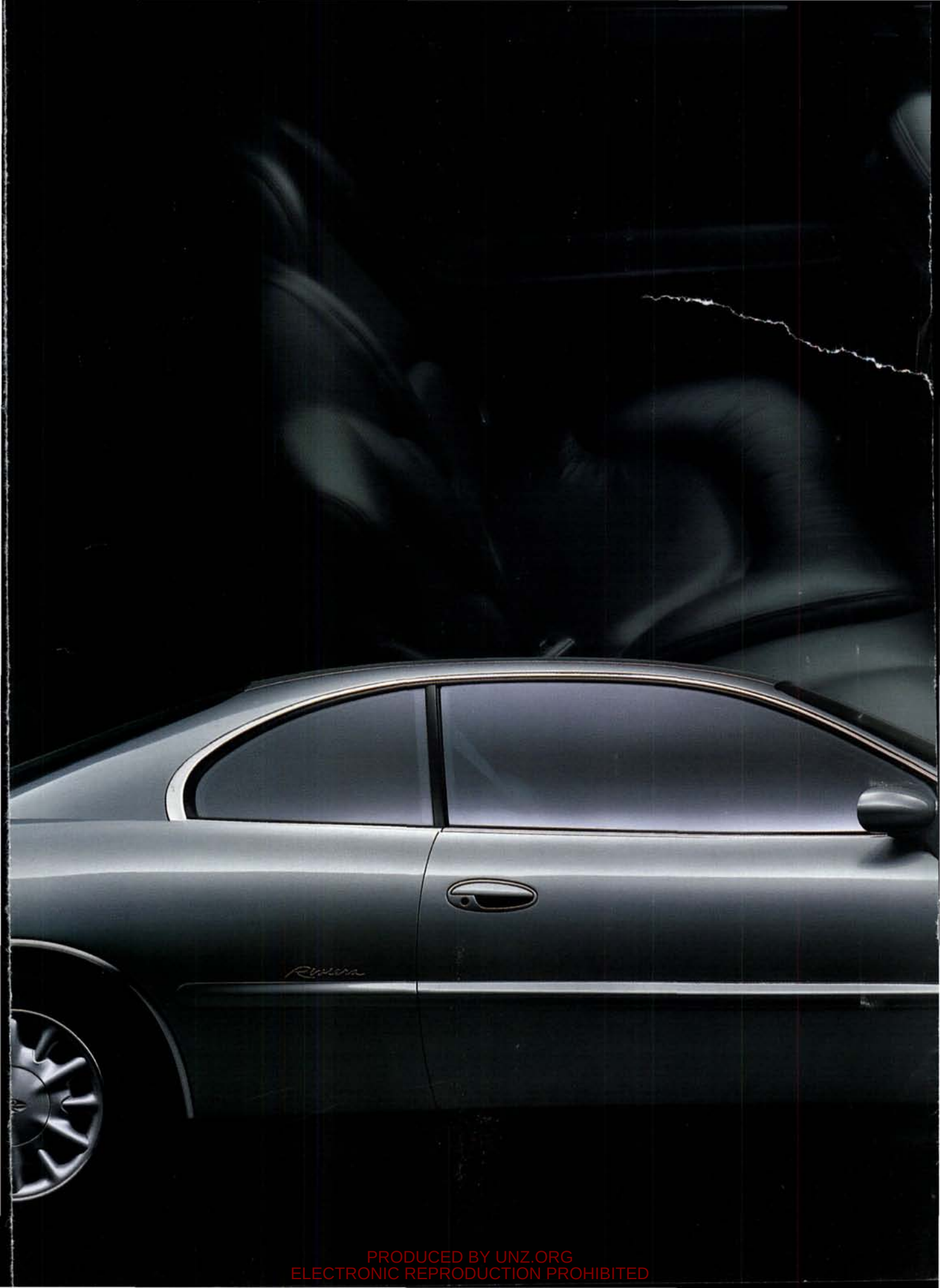

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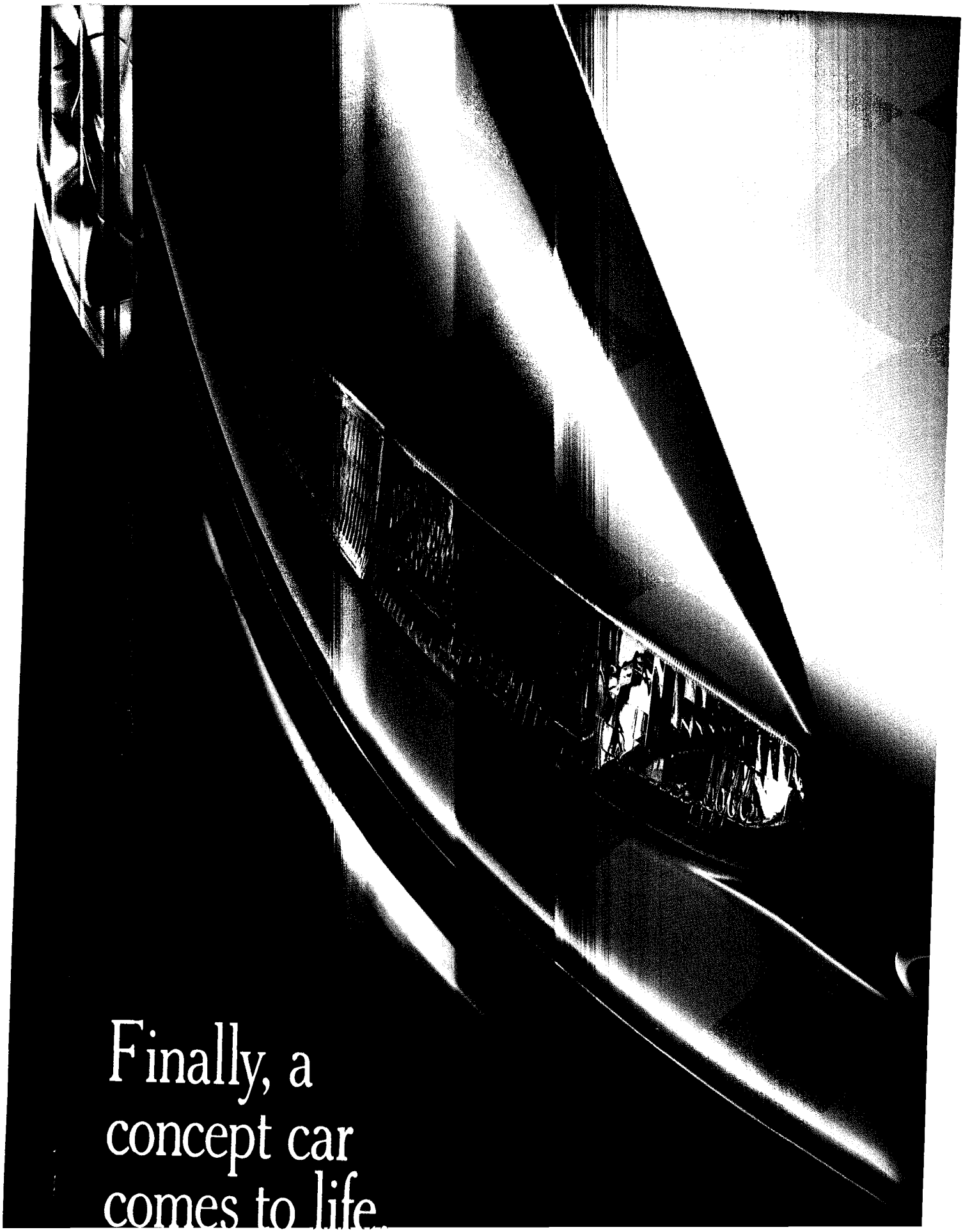

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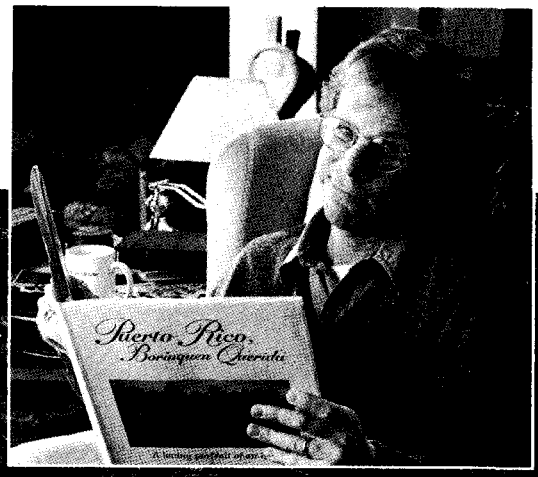

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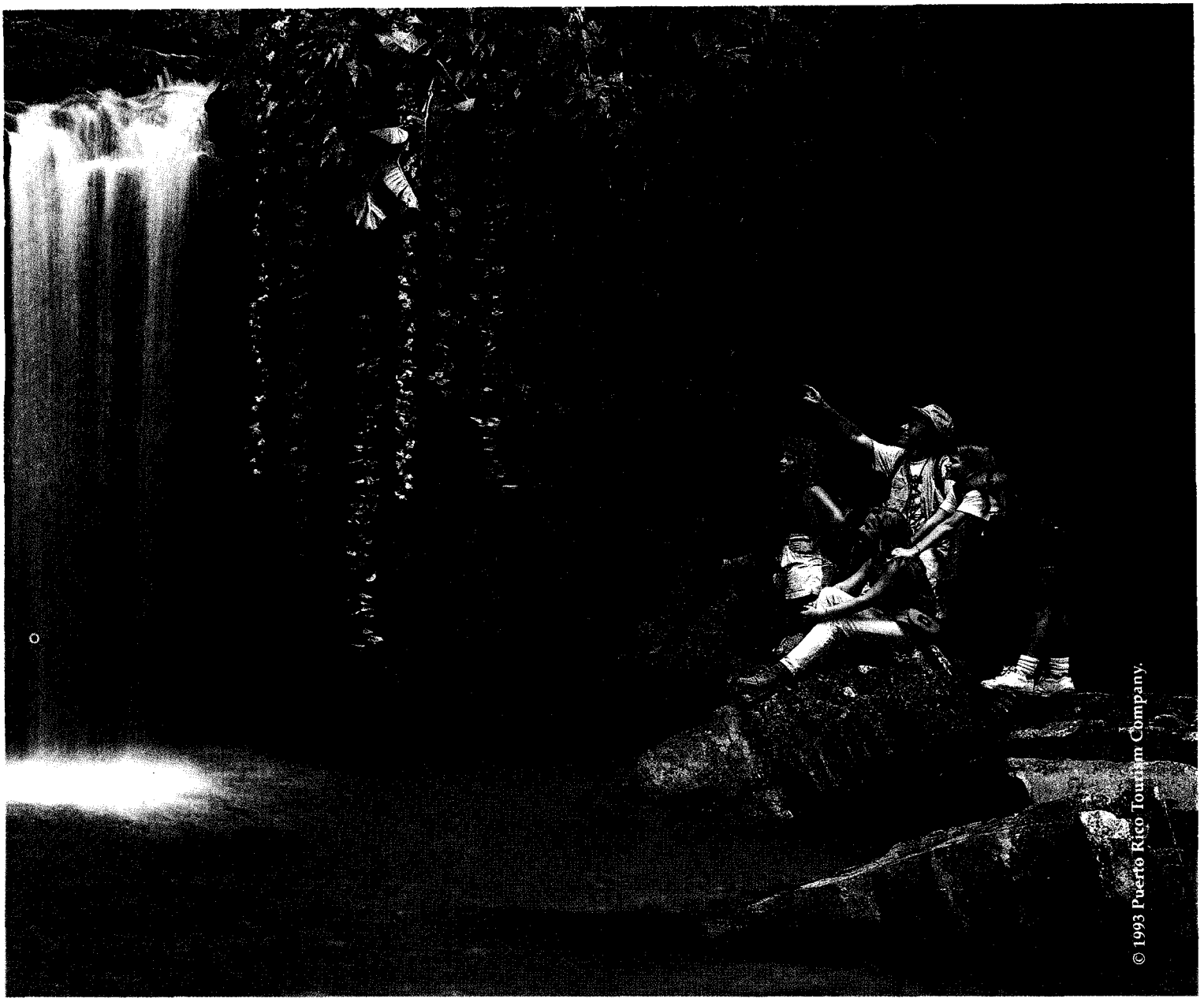

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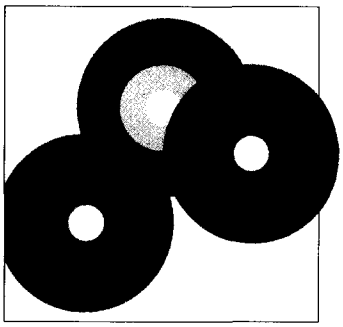

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Comprehensive sex education is supported by the pillars of the health and school establishments. Seventeen states have adopted mandates to teach comprehensive sex education. Thirty more states encourage it. And yet, despite the claims of advocates, there is no evidence that comprehensive-sex-education programs have much impact on teenagers' decisions to engage in or postpone sex, or that they encourage the effective use of contraception, or that they reduce the rate of teenage pregnancy and the incidence of sexually transmitted disease.

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"Hudson is about an eleven-hour drive from Brooklyn, where I now live," the author writes. "If I leave home in the morning, I get there at dusk or dark." In the dusk and dark the author revisits the town where he grew up, and offers a lyrical report.

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WHEN Ian Frazier's parents died within a short time of each other, in the late 1980s, Frazier fell heir to a family archive dating back to 1855. "There were thousands of letters," he says. "You wait generations for the person with the courage to throw them away." Frazier had just written *Great Plains*, a best-selling (and wonderful) exploration of the Midwest. He decided to write about the history of his own family, which had helped found the town in northeastern Ohio where he was baptized. An excerpt from *Family*, his new book, appears in this issue.

SUZAN WATENG

Frazier's goal was to create a memorial. "My parents died unpleasantly and young," he says. "I went through their stuff in order to find a meaning their lives had had and in order to defeat this death that had taken them." The goal was akin to his original purpose in becoming a writer, which had been to "mark" the life of a younger brother who died of leukemia when Frazier was a Harvard junior.

Just out of college Frazier became a staff writer for *The New Yorker*, and wrote some of that magazine's funniest and most memorable Talk of the Town articles and Profiles—including a classic portrait of Heloise, the household-tips columnist, which makes any journalist who reads it wish that he or she had written it. That article gave its name to Frazier's second collection of essays, *Nobody Better, Better Than Nobody*, which, together with Frazier's first book, *Dating Your Mom*, has led critics to compare him to Twain, Benchley, and Thurber.

Frazier spent five years researching and writing *Family*. "To see history come along underneath people and lift them up is humbling," he says. "It's funny for me to see my father, who was a strong-willed individualist, having five children in a very short time and not knowing he was part of the Baby Boom." A forebear's letters about Civil War battles describe "a tiny piece of an enormous picture," Frazier says. "To know what he was seeing, you have to back up and look at the troop movements and the strategy. I tried to do that throughout the book—to understand why the people were there and what they saw."

Frazier lives in Brooklyn with his wife, Jacqueline Carey, a fiction writer, and their two children. He finds the unseen hand in his own life "scary." "I'm writing and raising my kids, but some giant glacier is underneath me, moving me someplace," he says, "and there's not much I can do about it. But I can say, I was born here, I lived here, I'm going to die there, and this is what it was like in between." —THE EDITORS

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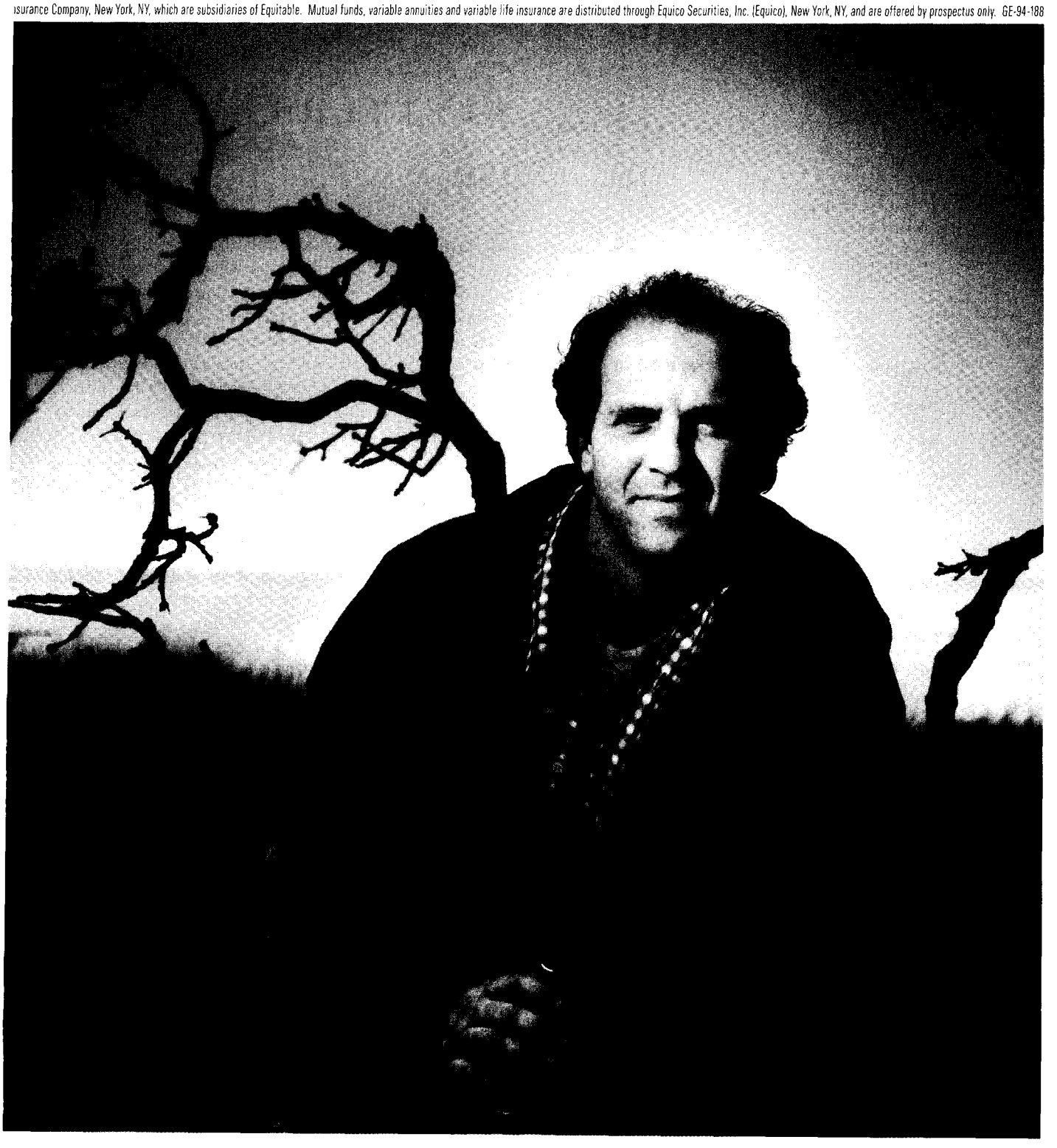

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LETTERS

Best Interests of the Child

I was sorry to see *The Atlantic* jump onto the back-to-the-orphanage bandwagon and join the media mob that has made trashing family preservation the latest fad in journalism.

Like everyone else out to discredit family preservation, Mary-Lou Weisman ("When Parents Are Not in the Best Interests of the Child," July *Atlantic*) must rely on John Schuerman and his study of the family-preservation program in Illinois. But that program took each rule about how to run such programs and broke it. In contrast, Michigan closely followed the pioneering model of the first family-preservation program, Homebuilders, in the state of Washington. A study of Michigan's program found that children who went through it were twice as likely to stay out of foster care as children in a comparison group.

In Alabama, where, under the terms of a consent decree, the entire system is being reoriented to emphasize family preservation, the foster-care caseload has been cut by 29 percent in the first counties adopting the new system. A court-appointed monitor found that the children are now safer than they were before the change.

Weisman is right about this much: money, and not the needs of the children, drives the child-welfare system. But for decades that money has been poured into foster care and institutions. Almost all the people Weisman spoke to who lavish praise on their own institutions would be unemployed if not for government dollars poured into their programs. In many cases institutions are funded on a per diem basis—that is, they are paid for every day they keep a child in care. Send a child home and the money stops.

The federal government spends eight times as much on substitute care as on all programs to keep families together. Even with the new federal money (which, Weisman fails to note, will be spread over five years and divided among scores of different programs, not just spent on family preservation), that imbalance is likely to continue. But the passage of the new law was a shot across the bow of the institutions' lobby. It is no coincidence that the barrage of attacks against family preservation followed its passage.

Elizabeth Vorenberg
National Coalition for Child Protection Reform
Cambridge, Mass.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for "When Parents Are Not in the Best Interests of the Child." It is refreshing to read an article that questions the appropriateness of emphasizing the family setting as the best place to care for children who present the kinds of behavior described. Those of us who work with these very difficult young people have long been aware that many of them do not have and cannot be given the emotional and behavioral wherewithal to function effectively as family members.

An additional point, however, seems never to be adequately addressed. We are quick to applaud less expensive care, but we conveniently ignore the intangible costs incurred by foster and adoptive parents and families who attempt to provide for these extremely difficult, often ungratifying, and sometimes very destructive children. We acknowledge the damage to children when these arrangements fail, but do we worry about the consequences for parents? How many of those who recruit foster and adoptive families, who laud the virtues of family as the only acceptable living arrangement, would be willing to take these children into their own homes? Very, very few, I suspect.

Glenina Nolte
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Mary-Lou Weisman is justly concerned. Pious posturing about maintaining idealized family ties often flies in the

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face of clear and undeniable evidence of chronic parental inadequacy and neglect. Weisman is also right on target when she points out that child-care programs—community, family-based, or institutional—are dollar-driven, uncoordinated, and competitive. The bottom-line fiscal decision-makers who opportunistically embraced the highly questionable strategy of wholesale psychiatric deinstitutionalization unfortunately are also in pragmatic charge here.

The failure and ultimate folly of this expedient thinking should worry us all, regardless of where we live. Upwards of $40,000 a year apiece is now being spent to imprison growing numbers of dysfunctional adults largely created by this present system of ill-defined, uncoordinated, and underfunded child-care programs. Surely this amount of money could be better spent earlier to prevent many of these failures.

Thomas Tourlentes
Galesburg, Ill.

I enjoyed the extensive coverage of residential care in Mary-Lou Weisman's article. I am a former program director at a residential-care facility that also housed the first family-preservation program in Colorado, and I can testify that our staff lived with the problems described in the article. Can we preserve families and keep children safe and nurtured? In many cases the answer is yes. However, we will always need residential care for those families about whom the answer is no. Weisman seemed to imply that as a society we must choose one solution over the other. In fact we need both, and they need to work more closely together.

Near the end of her article Weisman states that "a good children's institution is a hard place to leave." She neglects to point out that it is also a hard place to find. Most residential facilities are not well endowed, like those featured in the story, and struggle with a constant turnover of staff, poor financial support, deferred maintenance on facilities, and, most important, insufficient funds for family therapy while the child is in placement and after reunification.

Although the article implied a juxtaposition of residential care and family preservation, it did not give a very balanced picture. For many families, family preservation is an excellent alternative to unnecessary placement.

Kenneth R. Seeley
Colorado Foundation for Families and Children
Denver, Colo.

Mary-Lou Weisman is vague about the origins of residential treatment centers, saying only that "homes" and "schools" for emotionally disturbed children "appeared mid-century." Actually, the prototype for such services seems to have been introduced decades earlier—sponsored, ironically, by an orphanage.

In 1925 the Hebrew Orphan Asylum of New York opened the Edenwald School for Girls on property it owned in the Bronx. The school was intended as an experiment in training retarded girls to earn a living. Over the years the home admitted an increasing number of such children who were an extra burden because they needed more than the ordinary amount of supervision and couldn't be educated. After a shaky start the experiment went so well that in 1929 a school for retarded boys was added; it proved equally successful.

Eventually about sixty boys and girls were living in Edenwald, supervised by an unusually sensitive and progressive staff led by social-service professionals. Its director was a young psychologist named Myron Blanchard, who was assisted by a social worker, Augusta Berdansky, in charge of the girls. They were supported by two senior and junior counselors, another psychologist, a caseworker, and some teachers sent by the Board of Education. In training the staff, Blanchard was adamant on one point: he did not want Edenwald to become a clone of its parent institution.

Thus a permissive, unregimented, informal style reigned at Edenwald. The children lived in small rooms in groups of six to ten, of mixed ages. Although boys and girls slept in separate buildings, they mingled freely at all activities. No punishment of any kind was ever ordered for misbehavior. Instead, counselors were required to talk out the problem behavior with the children involved. They were instructed to use patience, encouragement, repetition, and approval—lots of approval. Blanchard believed in self-discipline and urged it on the children.

Edenwald offers the classic example of an institution whose residents preferred it to their own homes. When they visited their families on weekends, they couldn't wait to return.

Hymen Bogen
Bronx, N.Y.

Mary-Lou Weisman's excellent article does a great service. Children with some of the backgrounds and problems described should be allowed to live until adulthood in the institutions that are the only true homes they have ever known. They need the structure and the therapy and the special education and the protection. With it they thrive; without it many will die—literally, or at least emotionally.

On the other hand, services that support families, available at the right time, with the appropriate level of intensity and critically needed follow-up, can provide for other children the normalcy and dignity of being reared and nurtured in their own families of origin. When it works, everybody gains.

Dealing with the middle-ground children and families is much more complicated. These are the highly troubled youth who need periodic doses of intensive therapy and group modeling. These are the parents who at various points are totally incapable of parenting, and who at other times, with support, can well provide what is needed for adequate child-rearing.

Either-or answers are wildly off the mark. It is deeply disappointing that those of us who know the most about the children and families in question, and who care most deeply about them, are often in the forefront of pretending that a choice is acceptable.

Susan S. Stepleton
Edgewood Children's Center
St. Louis, Mo.

Sensitive Cats

Elizabeth Marshall Thomas ("Strong and Sensitive Cats," July *Atlantic*) says that cats are "no less social than many other species" and that the stereotype of the cat as solitary is seriously misleading. Perhaps the author is correct in some ways, but I think that the notion of animal sociality and its presumed converse, solitariness, may require some clarification.

It is true that cats have, as Thomas emphasizes, a rich repertoire of intraspecies

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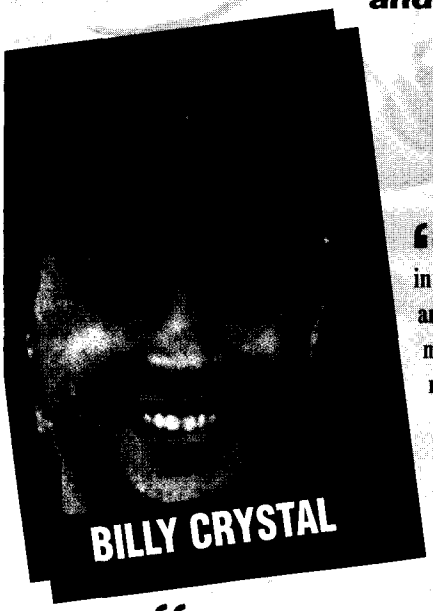
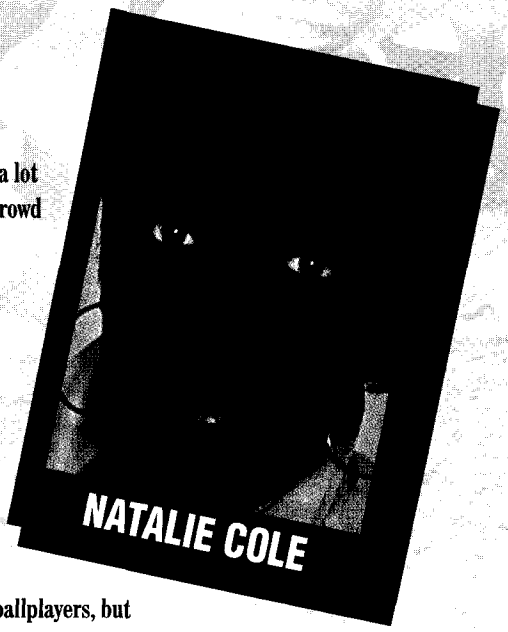
Ken Burns's *Baseball* has attracted an All-Star cast proud to be part of a historic event. Here are thoughts on the series—and the game—from some of *Baseball*'s high profile players.



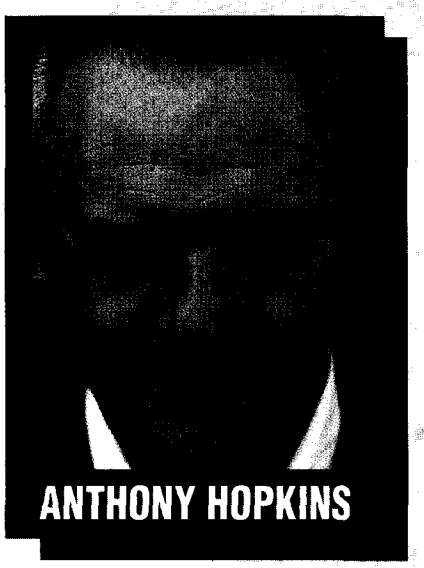
"I grew up wanting to be a ballplayer. Of course, baseball has a lot in common with comedy. You stand up in front of a huge, noisy crowd and people throw things at you. But to grow up playing baseball means something uniquely American, and that's what Ken has really captured in this series. Just like the game itself, it's a wonderful time for the whole family."

— Billy Crystal



"My father was great friends with a lot of ballplayers, but especially Jackie Robinson. I met him when I was quite young. It's almost impossible to tell you how people felt about Jackie at the time, how much he meant to our community. And as Ken Burns says, Jackie Robinson is not just an inspiration for baseball fans, but one of the great Americans of all time, a true hero for everyone. *Baseball* explores many of Jackie's contributions."

— Natalie Cole



"I found it fascinating how Ken Burns was able to use *Baseball* as a lens to examine American society from the Civil War to the present. It is really the story of the rise of a country that was looking for ways to define itself, to invent an identity. So many themes suggest themselves here—the rise of popular culture, the clash of labor and management, the search for truly American heroes. It is an integral part of the American character."

— Anthony Hopkins

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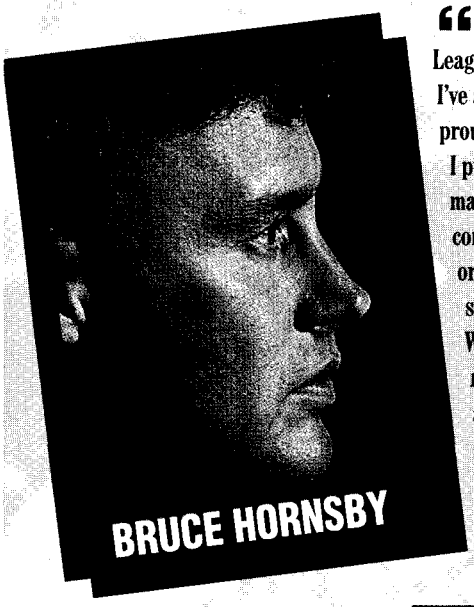
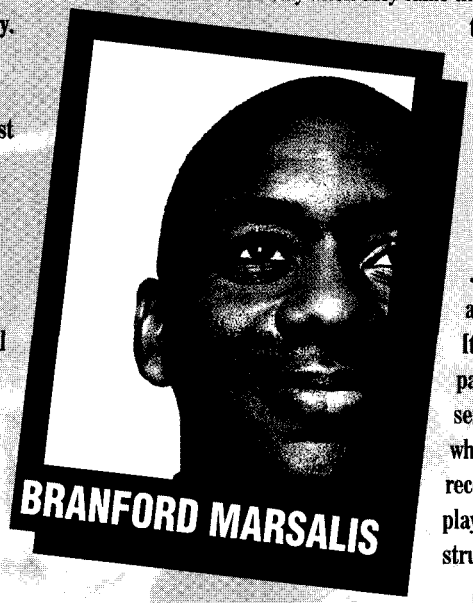


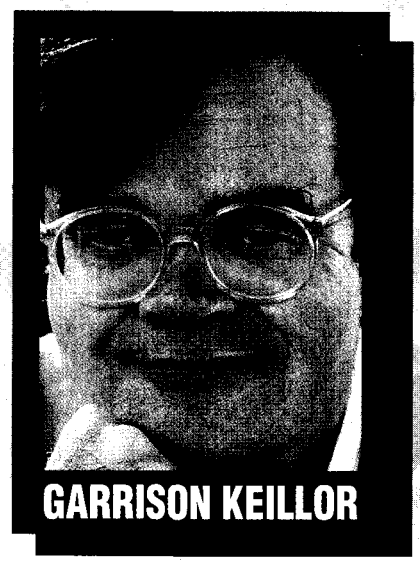
"Even though I never played past Little League, and I'm no relation to Rogers Hornsby, I've always loved the game of baseball and am proud to be a small part of the documentary. I probably owe my exemption from college math to the game, having learned how to compute batting averages and ERAs in first or second grade, and probably missed some of the great sights of the American West on a family trip at age eight while memorizing Stan Musial's batting averages in the car. Ken Burns's *Baseball* is a very special work and will be enjoyed by both fans and non-fans of the great American game."

— Bruce Hornsby



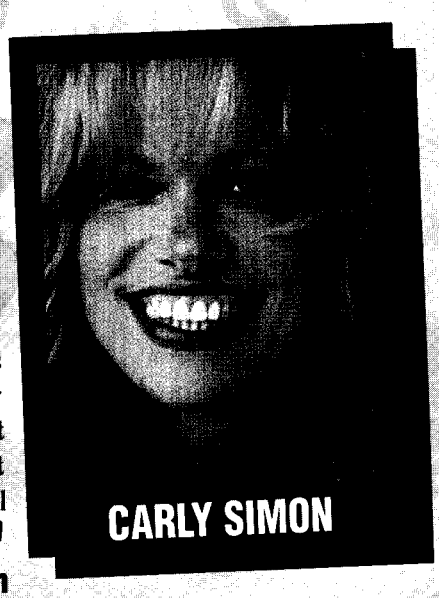
"*Baseball* touches me personally. My grandfather owned a motel in New Orleans where the old Negro League players would stay when they came through. He used to tell me about all the great players he had met and spent time with, people like Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson and Buck O'Neil. It's an honor to participate in a series like this, which helps recognize those players and their struggles."

— Branford Marsalis



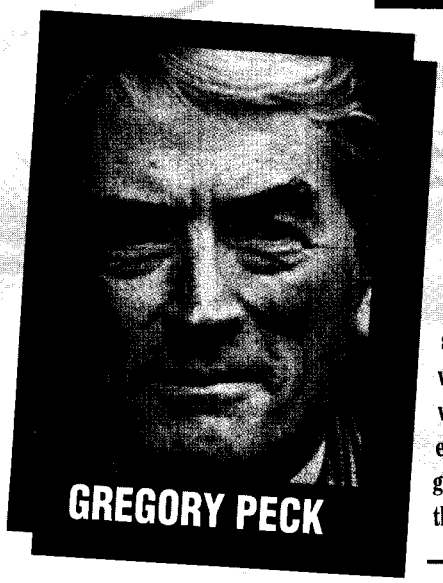
"Without baseball, America would be just another country, like Switzerland but without the sense of irony. If you have time to watch only one baseball documentary this fall, it probably ought to be Ken Burns's *Baseball*."

— Garrison Keillor



"I knew Jackie Robinson personally from the time I was nine years old until his death. My parents were instrumental in helping the Robinsons find a house in the previously segregated town of Stamford, Connecticut and while their new property was under construction, we were so lucky to have the Robinson family live with us. I used to ride to Ebbetts Field with Jackie in his car to a lot of Dodgers home games. Jackie's story is just one of the many facets of *Baseball* that makes it an important program for all Americans to see."

— Carly Simon



"I'm old enough to be an actual Babe Ruth fan. When I was a kid he was still in his prime. There was a moment in each day, long before television, when we informed ourselves of what he had done the day before. It was a moment of anticipation, pleasure, satisfaction, excitement. The Babe was part of my life then and in a way still is. I think *Baseball* helps explain the fascination of the game for these people who call themselves Americans."

— Gregory Peck

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communicative responses. It is also true that some research indicates that urban feral cats form loose societies, although the degree of social organization apparently depends on various factors, including the availability of food. So even if cats appear to be, or in some respects really are, solitary, they are certainly capable of social behavior—that is, social behavior is to some degree part of their innate behavioral repertoire. But consider the following:

Except for lions and perhaps cheetahs, cats do not hunt cooperatively or feed communally on kills, as do wolves, hyenas, and wild African hunting dogs. Small cats must necessarily kill and consume their prey in isolation, because birds and rodents are too small to permit communal meals. But most large cats, such as tigers and leopards, are also solitary hunters and eaters (except for mothers dining with their cubs).

Compared with wolves, lions and domestic (feral and neighborhood) cats are not well organized and do not function effectively to inhibit lethal battles among adults or infanticide perpetrated by adult males.

I probably don't understand cat signs as well as Thomas does. But if I am largely correct, then the stereotype of cats as solitary is not totally erroneous.

Thomas Robbins
Rochester, Minn.

How could Elizabeth Marshall Thomas not deduce that a cat running into walls might be blind? It is the most obvious sign of blindness in any creature. And why is it that no veterinarian is mentioned?

More important is the issue of spaying and neutering pets. Both in her popular book on dogs and in this article, Thomas discusses unneutered family pets. There may be extenuating circumstances—perhaps Thomas adopted a cat that was pregnant on arrival. That is not unusual. However, to anyone who works in, or even visits, an animal shelter, no discussion of pets should exclude this subject.

Neutering a pet does not deny that animal its true nature, with the possible exception of making a male animal less aggressive—and even that is debated among veterinarians. Neutering a pet denies that animal the agony of heats for females, the mad wandering and fighting of males, various cancers for both, and, most obvious, the frantic reproduction rate of cats and dogs. A tragic number of pet owners allow their pets "just one litter" for the "miracle" of birth. If only they could see the aftereffects.

Antonia Gardner
Baltimore, Md.

Elizabeth Marshall Thomas replies:

Cats are highly social in a way we don't really recognize. Lack of space prevented a more detailed discussion of this interesting attribute of cat life, but it is discussed in my book rather extensively.

Re Ms. Gardner's concerned questions about my blind cat: The cat was taken quite regularly to a veterinarian, as are all our animals. The blindness was difficult to diagnose because even though the cat occasionally ran into a wall, she would still follow our movements with her eyes, as if she were seeing us. At last a veterinarian diagnosed her blindness. As for the spaying and neutering of pets, I must say that I agree with Ms. Gardner's point of view, and I don't know why she believes our cats are fertile. They're not. But since she raises the subject, I would like to share an observation about unspayed, unneutered dogs, and it is this: few people complain about purebred dogs having puppies. The dogs that raise people's ire are usually mongrels or crossbreeds like mine. Anyone wanting to curb the senseless breeding of dogs should broach the subject with the American Kennel Club.

Border Patrol

"A Bold Proposal on Immigration," by Jack Miles (June *Atlantic*), mentioned Jorge G. Castañeda's ideas on illegal immigration, which were published in *The California-Mexico Collection*. I found a copy of that anthology and compared Castañeda's ideas with those of several other illegal-immigration proponents in the United States and abroad.

One view is that U.S. policy on illegal immigration is undemocratic and sometimes even obdurately cruel. Most Western Europeans (and Western Europe is now occasionally compared to the United States by the "admissionists") cannot comprehend how any debate on the legitimacy of illegal immigration (including the suggested right to participate in elections!) is possible.

Castañeda points to Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Ireland, and Switzerland, claiming that these countries have allowed foreigners to participate in local elections. He is right, indeed they have, and Austria and even Germany can be added to the list. However, these European countries have allowed legal permanent residents to vote in local elections—not illegal aliens! He also omits the fact that the majority of typical Mexican illegal immigrants would never qualify to become legal permanent residents in those European countries, as they would have to pass rigorous language and history exams and present proven references—sometimes of local ethnic origin. Unlike the United States, the European countries Castañeda mentions are nation-states, where foreigners of non-Caucasian origin are unofficially regarded as second-class people. These European countries are small and fragile and have a unique language. Even where several ethnic groups share the same country (Finns and Swedes in Finland, Austrians and Slovenes in Austria), they have done so for centuries; thus they are similar in appearance, traditions, and behavioral sociologic patterns, and are culturally intimate.

The United States has the most calamitous illegal-alien problem of all the Western countries. The exodus from and through Mexico is unparalleled in recorded human history by any continuous peacetime migration across a border of an existing sovereign stable state. To say that curtailing illegal immigration is foul bigotry and racism is to be deceitful or ignorant or both.

Some argue that a well-protected border will effectively turn the United States into a kind of huge capitalist East Germany and the U.S. Border Patrol into a local breed of Grenzepolizei—that construction of any real fortifications along the border will shock and abash America and the world. Wrong. The truth is that West Germany had, and Germany has, its own Grenzepolizei, complete with armored personnel carriers, helicopters, radars, and cannons—not with INS badges. Essentially all developed democratic countries have extensive border-protection organizations—often far more potent than the U.S. Border Patrol. Swe-

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den, which has a very small population but borders of immense length and arduous terrain, has fully fortified borders that are regularly patrolled by aircraft and has extensive ground-control and surveillance systems that are fully integrated into the overall defense and national-security system. Such arrangements might not be politically acceptable in the United States, but one should remember that Sweden is a liberal democracy (which ranks higher on the Amnesty International Freedom list than does the United States) and one must have a passport to enter it. Austria is one of the most open countries in the world, but Austrians have tanks, radar, and machine guns along their borders.

The situation for the United States is even more perilous, because Mexico does not diligently police its own borders—leaving the United States with the sole burden of maintaining order. For a border to be essentially guarded on and by just one side is highly unusual between democracies. It is also unfair.

Eugene Soukharnikov
Providence, R.I.

Jack Miles replies:

Eugene Soukharnikov brings to the policing of U.S. borders the astonishment of a European immigrant accustomed to seeing border control routinely and inoffensively integrated into national defense. Americans who object to the "militarization" of our borders sometimes forget that our maritime borders, our coasts, are already militarized, inasmuch as the Coast Guard, which intercepts illegal immigrants with increasing frequency, is a branch of the military. Should the Coast Guard, like the Border Patrol, be under the jurisdiction of the Department of Justice? Or should the Border Patrol be a "Border Guard," matching the Coast Guard and under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense? Proposals that the National Guard be used to reinforce the Border Patrol, though they have been resisted, highlight the inconsistency of current arrangements along with their inadequacy to a genuinely new challenge.

Finding an appropriately nonviolent way to police U.S. coasts, borders, and air access points which stresses deterrence over apprehension will take some doing; but to suggest, as too many have, that the effort is irrelevant, a fool's errand, is like saying that the police are irrelevant to crime control. Deterring illegal entry cannot be the whole answer, but it is surely a part of the answer; and a study released by the U.S. Immigration Commission on July 27 has confirmed that much of the early-deterrent effect of Operation Hold the Line continues, with various beneficial side-effects.

IQ and Status

Nicholas Lemann ("2034," June *Atlantic*) cavalierly dismisses the argument that status more reflects than causes IQ and that IQ reflects primarily hereditary physiological factors. He does so on the grounds that few people other than psychometricians accept the argument as correct.

But psychometricians (and researchers from other fields who do or study psychometric work) are the only people who even address the questions that must be answered before we can begin to learn whether the argument is true or false. Others, like Lemann, simply assert a cultural cause of the empirical evidence (that is, the correlation of IQ and status) and ignore the findings of the psychometricians which increasingly indicate that IQ is crucial and is caused primarily by hereditary factors.

For example: It is clear that the more culture-loaded a test question, the better the members of certain minority groups do. The more abstract (free of culture and language) the question, the worse these test takers do. To discover this, the psychometrician does not subjectively decide which questions are culture-biased. He observes that certain minority groups have the hardest time with precisely the same questions that the majority finds difficult. The culture-bias view incorrectly implies that the members of minority groups will find certain questions (the culture-loaded ones) to be the most difficult, while members of the majority will not. The psychometric empirical evidence demonstrates that this is incorrect.

Likewise, those who abhor the possibility that heredity plays a crucial role assert that IQ tests are unfair to minority students. What *this* claim means is that IQ tests do worse in predicting performance (the purpose of the IQ test) for minority students than they do for majority students. Again, the empirical evidence demonstrates that this is not true.

The issue here is not answering the question of the role of heredity in success but doing what is necessary if the question is to be answered. No one *likes* the implications of the evidence. But the evidence doesn't care and doesn't justify the acceptance of social theories that are based more on wish than on logic.

S. J. Estes
New York, N.Y.

Nicholas Lemann replies:

I plead no contest to the charge of being brief and facile in the way I summarized the current state of the debate about IQ. But Mr. Estes goes on to attribute to me a detailed critique of IQ—pretty much the standard liberal critique—which wasn't in my article. I didn't say that IQ isn't inheritable, and I didn't say that "certain minority groups" (I assume he means blacks) do worse than whites on IQ tests because the tests are "culture-biased." To my mind, the issue is not so much whether mental tests themselves should be reformed as it is how society should use the results of these tests.

The advantage of intelligence tests is that they help a society to identify and train for specialized tasks those with high IQs. But as far as I can tell, identification and training of the intelligent would happen in the United States even without IQ tests. One disadvantage is that the tests create the kind of rigidly polarized class society that Michael Young envisioned (and what Young didn't imagine: that the polarization might be along lines that would exacerbate ethnic and racial tensions). Another is that rather than measuring "general intelligence," by far the most important factor in advanced societies, tests catch only one aspect of it, which for both cultural and genetic reasons tends to run in families, and they miss other qualities, such as persistence, imagination, and leadership.

Fans of the IQ test tend to paint themselves as realists who have confronted painful truths about individual and group differences, as opposed to the Luddites and Lysenkoists who prefer ideological purity to intellectual honesty. To put me in the latter category, as I believe Mr. Estes does in his letter, requires divining hidden assumptions in my article, rather than sticking to what I said.

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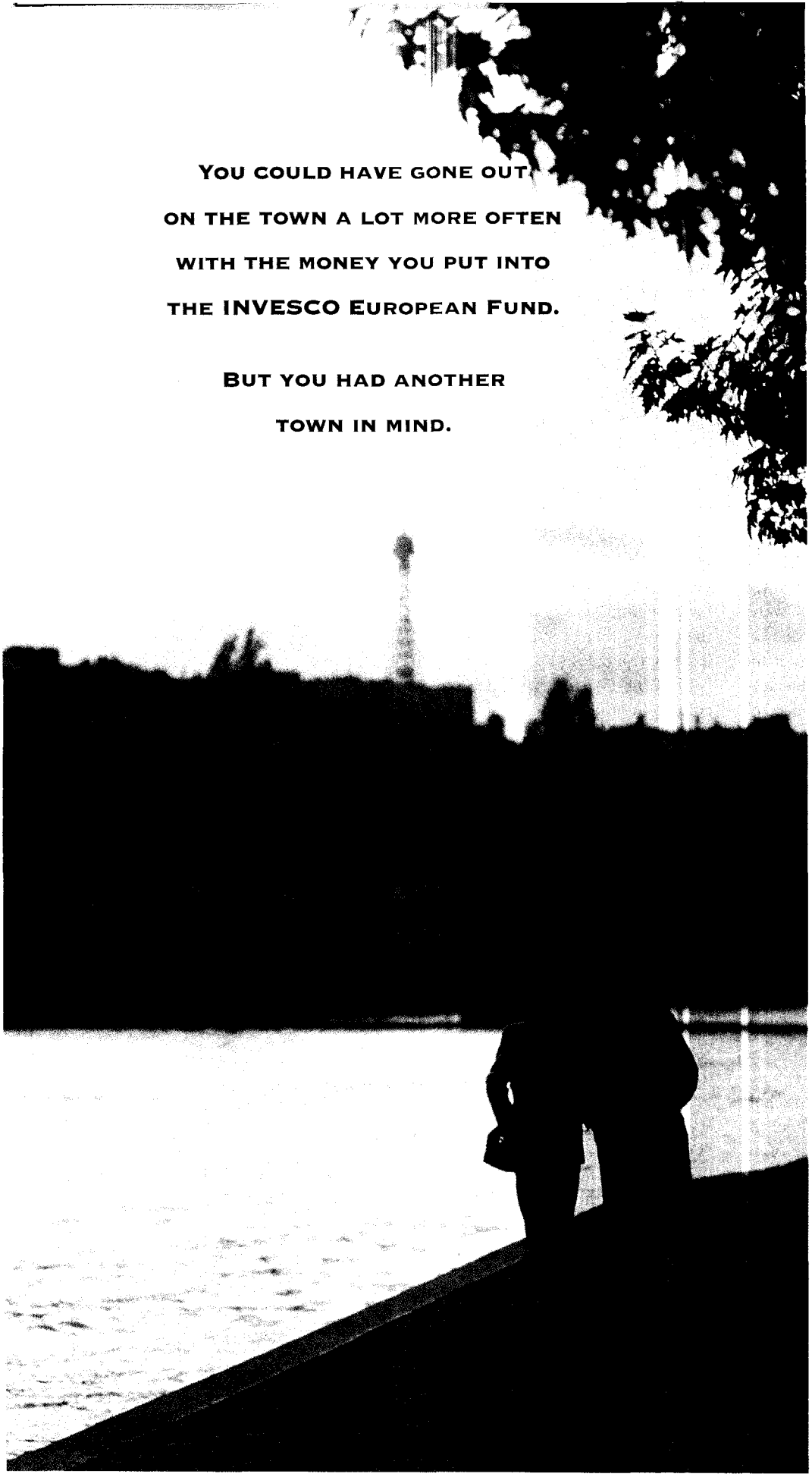
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Middle Class

Jack Beatty ("Who Speaks for the Middle Class?," May *Atlantic*) addresses a major issue in the changing character of the American polity. Had he given as much attention to the social factors leading to the downward course of the middle class as he did to the economic ones, he could have avoided his dolorous shrug-of-the-shoulders conclusion.

The GI Bill was the defining institution of the postwar era. It was firmly in the American tradition of rewarding soldiers by giving them a leg up, and it was largely responsible for the great postwar explosion of the middle class. It sent millions into colleges and universities and shaped those decades of growth which Beatty documents. Those of us who taught the ex-grunts at that time know how earnest and motivated and capable they were. They had come from every sector and circumstance of the land to partake of the American Dream. With their education and newfound sense of self, often aided by the power of unionization that had been made possible by the New Deal's National Labor Relations Act, they rose and prospered—and then turned their backs on unionism in true middle-class, we-have-made-it-on-our-own fashion.

Among the many side effects of this GI program was the great burgeoning of the institutions of higher learning—the expansion of state universities throughout the nation, the proliferation of community colleges and other lesser institutions, and the democratization of the Ivy League colleges. Also, of course, the great expansion of intellectual pursuits and the explosion of scientific and scholarly knowledge. (My own discipline, anthropology, was growing at a rate of 10 percent a year during the fifties and sixties.) This rapid growth diluted the quality of higher education far less than might have been expected. The universalization of college education had another effect: college professors became the keepers of the gate to middle-class heaven. All this was perhaps as it should be in the "meritocracy" that emerged with the new value orientation—and that was often castigated by the intelligentsia as philistinism.

It was what did not happen next that was the most important cause of the decline of the middle class: the failure to provide a similar GI program for veterans of the Vietnam War. The tragedy of that bitter and frustrating war was compounded by the abandonment of the soldiers who had fought it and who were treated as if its failure were their fault. Most of these soldiers came from the impoverished sector of our nation; in large measure they were black, Latino, or members of other minority groups—the sector from which the next generation of middle-class entrants should have been recruited. Had we drawn the ambitious and the able from that cadre of men and women, our ghettos and inner cities would not be so full of the frustrated, the desperate, and the defeated.

Walter Goldschmidt
Los Angeles, Calif.

Jack Beatty has written a clear and compelling—if somewhat dreary—piece on the economic woes of our country. Other than his failing to suggest remedies, I have two quibbles:

First, he states, "As companies cut corners in production . . . higher wages would lower the quality of domestic goods, making imports more attractive." As one who assists my clients in business-process redesign, I find this statement nonsensical. Trimming the "fat" from manufacturing costs, increasing wages, and improving quality are *not* mutually exclusive but mutually reinforcing. However, redesign efforts, even successful ones, *can* result in loss of jobs if labor has been inefficiently applied in the past, and either improved quality does not expand the company's prospects or some workers haven't the skills to perform the remaining, value-added tasks.

The second quibble is with Beatty's statement on paying for public education: "People cannot be expected to pay more taxes if their incomes are declining or their jobs are threatened." From what I have read and heard, the real objection to more money for education is not that it pinches the budget (even very small increases, amounting only to tens of dollars per year per homeowner, have been rejected by voters) but that the taxpayers believe their money will be wasted by an educational system that is top-heavy with bureaucrats, inefficient and demoralizing to classroom teachers and students alike. The same productivity movement that has (in some cases) been turning American manufacturing around needs to be applied to our educational system, and the sooner the better!

William F. Hunter
Houston, Texas

Jack Beatty did an excellent job of delineating what a mess we are in and how we got there—but what's a poor middle-class slob supposed to do to improve the situation? According to Beatty, our situation "is a circular, self-generating crisis for which it is hard to come up with convincingly efficacious solutions."

Well, here are some suggestions, at no charge to the taxpayer:

Believe you can do something to improve yourself, your home, your community, every day.
Eat broccoli, beans, and bananas (or the nutritional equivalent) five times each day.
Read to a child ten minutes each day.
Earn an honest income.
Save $5 for every $100 of income.
Pray or Ponder Life alone for fifteen minutes every day.
Offer five hours of your time each week as a volunteer for something important to you.
Never watch more than seven hours of commercial television in one week.
Schedule a three-mile walk three times a week.
Indicate your preferences by voting knowledgeably in every election.
Buy products made in the U.S.A.
Limit lawsuits to one per lifetime.
Establish positive contact with at least four neighbors at least twice a month.

Susanne Haynes Thorn
Dallas, Texas

Jack Beatty correctly points out that the median family income hit a low point in the early 1980s and that wages fell from 1989 to 1993. But he fails to point out that incomes rose from 1982 to 1989. In reality, inflation-adjusted incomes have ups and downs similar to those of the stock market, although on a much longer time scale. To get a true picture, one must look at the overall trend, not just a local minimum or a few years of decreases. The mistake is similar to saying, "The stock market is down 10 percent in the past four months; if this trend continues, stocks will be valueless in another three years."

James Brant
Champlin, Minn.

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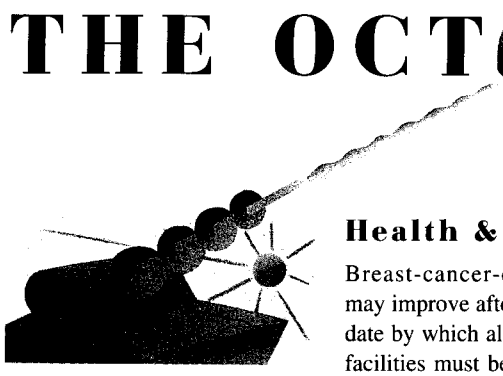
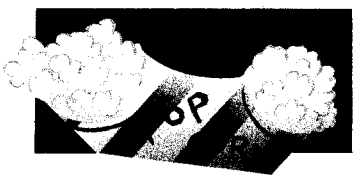


Food

This month scientists at the U.S. Army's Research Development and Engineering Center in Natick, Massachusetts, will begin tasting samples of food preserved without heat. The goal is to diversify the military's combat fare, known as MREs (for "meals, ready-to-eat"). The samples are the results of $2.2 million worth of contracts awarded two years ago by the Department of Defense to several academic and industry groups. MREs now consist mainly of thermally processed food; however, the heat used to kill pathogens also saps color, flavor, and vitamins. Among the samples likely to be submitted to the Army's tasters: Spanish rice, spaghetti with meat sauce, yogurt, and fruit salad sterilized by means of high pressure; and milk, apple juice, and pea soup that have been passed through high-voltage pulsating electric fields.

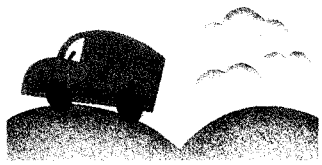
Expiring Patents

No. 4,051,993. Popcorn Package for Two Users. "A package . . . allowing two theatre patrons seated side-by-side . . . to consume the comestible in said package conveniently, said package . . . having . . . a flat bottom wall for stability when the package is resting on the laps of two users, . . . a sufficient length to extend approximately between the centers of two adjacent theatre seats, and . . . a pair of separated top product access and removal openings in the package body near opposite ends."



Health & Safety

Breast-cancer-detection rates may improve after October **1**, the date by which all mammography facilities must be certified in accordance with the Food and Drug Administration's Mammography Quality Standards Act. From now on all mammography clinics must undergo regular inspections and audits, employ specially trained technicians, and check images against biopsy results. The act was prompted in part by complaints from women, and an accompanying furor in the media, about diagnoses that were missed or delayed because of faulty practices at clinics that did not submit to voluntary inspections and accreditation. Still at issue: the age at which testing should begin. Some authorities, including the American Cancer Society, suggest that it should start at 40, whereas others, including the National Cancer Institute, suggest that it should start at 50. Last year 28,900 women in their forties were diagnosed as having breast cancer.



Environment

October **20**, closing ceremonies for the nation's most comprehensive test to date of alternative motor fuels, known as CleanFleet, will be held today in Los Angeles. For the past two years researchers have collected data from more than 100 Federal Express delivery trucks in and around Los Angeles that were powered by compressed natural gas, methanol, propane, reformulated gasoline (gas treated with oxygen to reduce emissions), or electricity. Results from the study, some of which are to be released today, will help guide the country's transition to alternative fuels, as required by various congressional acts. Because fleet vehicles log high annual mileage and receive frequent attention from mechanics, Congress has seen them as an ideal test market for new technologies and has made them the first object of new regulations. According to the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, 30 percent of the new vehicles bought by fleet owners in 22 metropolitan areas must run on alternative fuels by 1998; 70 percent must do so by 2000.

The Skies

October **7**, Venus lies low on the southwestern horizon just after sunset; above it is the crescent Moon and, somewhat higher, Jupiter. **15**, Saturn lies below the waxing Moon. Observers who have not gotten around to training binoculars or a telescope on the planet may wish to do so now, because next year its rings will face us edge-on and therefore be essentially invisible. **19**, Full Moon, also known this month as the Hunter's or Dying Grass Moon. **30**, at 2:00 A.M., Daylight Saving Time ends. Turn clocks back one hour.

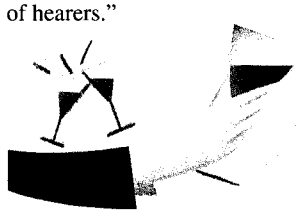
Government

October **1**, at least two federal efforts to nudge states or businesses to improve some aspect of safety "voluntarily" get under way today. First, under a provision of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, the states that do not mandate the wearing of seatbelts and motorcycle helmets will see federal money transferred from highway funds to safety projects; more than $53 million, in 28 states, will be transferred. Second, under the Hotel and Motel

Fire Safety Act of 1990, at least 65 percent or more of all federal-employee "room-nights"—federal employees are the hotel industry's largest single source of revenue—must henceforth be spent in establishments deemed "fire safe." To qualify, buildings must be equipped with a hard-wired smoke-alarm system and, if higher than three floors, an automatic sprinkler system as well.

75 Years Ago

Burges Johnson, writing in the October, 1919, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*, on the question "Is After-Dinner Speaking a Disease?": "It is [the toastmaster's] custom to weigh the happiness of a hundred diners against the possible injury to the feelings of a single speaker, and then to shirk the obvious duty incumbent upon him. Cowards, these toastmasters, and little wonder! For when by rare chance a truly courageous soul presides over the feast, and it falls to his lot to dam some stream of inexhaustible eloquence, he wins the hatred of one whose brain-child he so ruthlessly mutilated, and the indifference of many who never knew what they were spared. Out of any hundred toastmasters that you have known, will you not admit that at least ninety have failed to exercise courageously the authority invested in them? Not only have they not controlled the floods they were set to guard, but often they have themselves overflowed upon a surfeited, saturated meadow-land of hearers."



Illustrations by Coco Masuda

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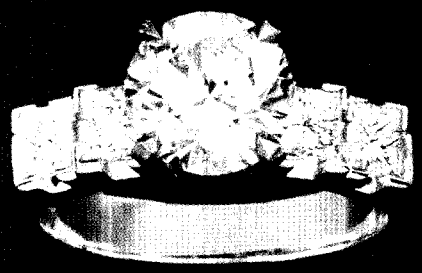
"The first time I gave her a diamond ring she could barely speak for a week."

I'll always remember that face.
The smile bordering on a tear.
Eyes as lively as the diamond
I nervously slipped on her finger.
And now that we have come
so far together, perhaps it's time to
celebrate that love, again, with a
diamond as exceptional as our love.



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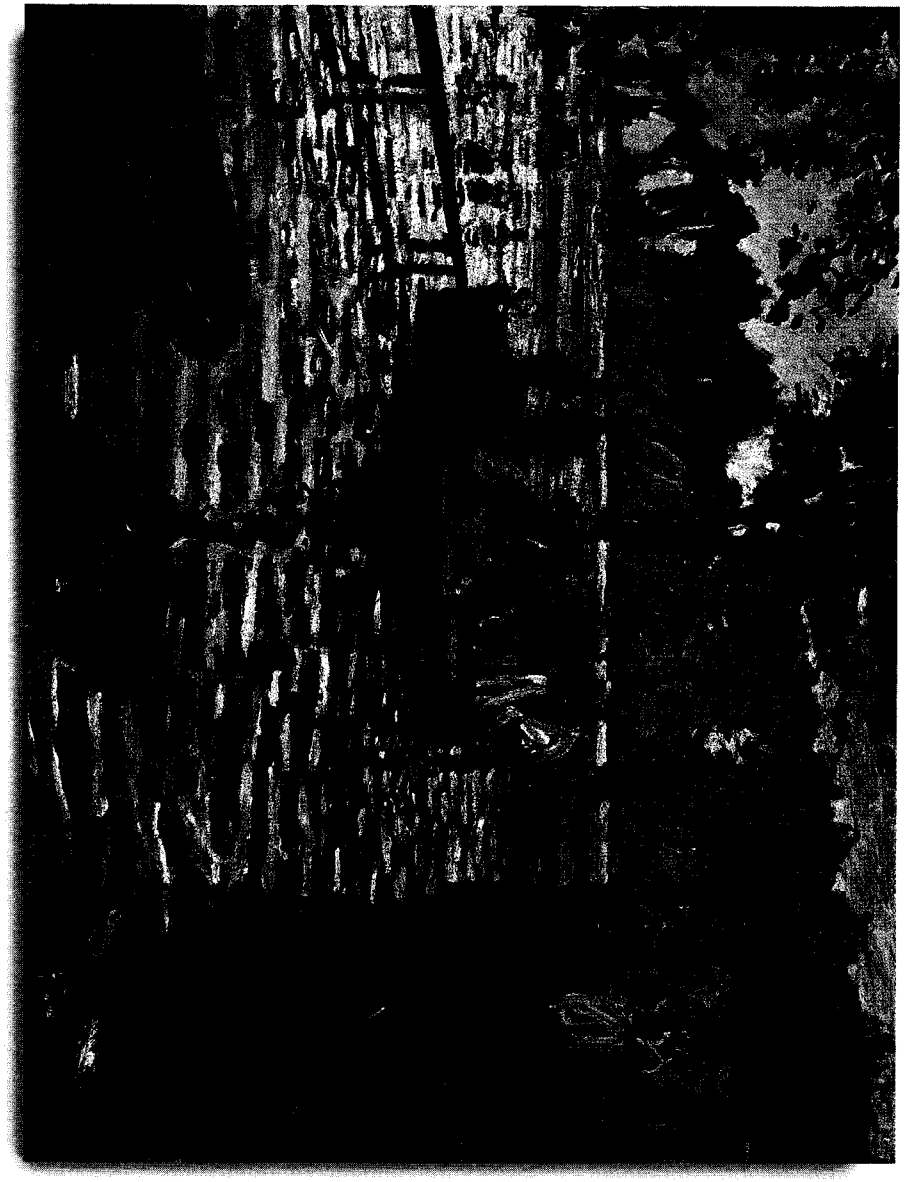
Claude Monet, *La Grenouillère, 1869.* The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



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Auguste Renoir, *La Grenouillère, 1869.* Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

ORIGINS OF IMPRESSIONISM

What was it about Monet that inspired Renoir? How did Manet influence Cézanne? With a never-before-assembled collection of nearly 170 works, Origins of Impressionism paints a picture of how this innovative, avant-garde era began. It brings together the paintings of artists from Courbet, Manet and Renoir to Monet, Bazille, Whistler, to name a gifted few. Painters who traveled, studied, even painted side-by-side. Artists who were years ahead of their time. The comparative nature of the exhibition is both fascinating and illuminating. As you'll see, nearly a century later each ambitious canvas is still able to leave quite an Impression. For more information, call (212) 570-3791.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
September 27, 1994-January 8, 1995

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Into the Archives

A second look at my first intimations of genius

by David Owen

It will come as a surprise to many, but up until the time I was twenty-one or twenty-two, I was known primarily as a poet. Indeed, those most familiar with my work during those years believed that I would one day take my place among that handful of writers of verse who can without exaggeration be classified as "major" or "great." My published oeuvre was small—poems of mine had appeared in *Helicon* and, once I was in college, *Kinnikinnik*—but much of my writing was so powerful or so beautiful that it would literally take my breath away, along with the breath of my teachers and, not infrequently, the breath of other people as well. This no doubt explains the inclusion of my work in the 1975 edition of *Who's Who in Poetry in American Colleges and Universities.*

I have always believed that inspiration is not a bolt from the blue but rather a reward for diligent effort. And I worked hard at my poetry, keeping a small notebook in my pocket at all times. At any moment of the day or night I might jot down an arresting phrase, a stunning insight, a description of a sad-eyed unemployed person wandering slowly through the streets of the ghetto. This raw material I would later fashion into finished verses, marking each with the internationally recognized symbol of copyright. In all my writing I used a certain type of inexpensive fountain pen that was widely available in those days. The pen used ink that came in small disposable plastic cartridges. Do you know this type of pen? It was marvelous, and it made the most marvelous line. Texture is everything in poetry, I think. At any rate, I thought so at the time.

As for the notebooks, I did not favor any particular brand. I say this with assurance, because those old notebooks—those glowing forges of my imagination—are piled on my desk as I write this. I came across them this morning, while hunting for certain documents of apparent interest to the Internal Revenue Service. I haven't looked at them in nearly twenty years.

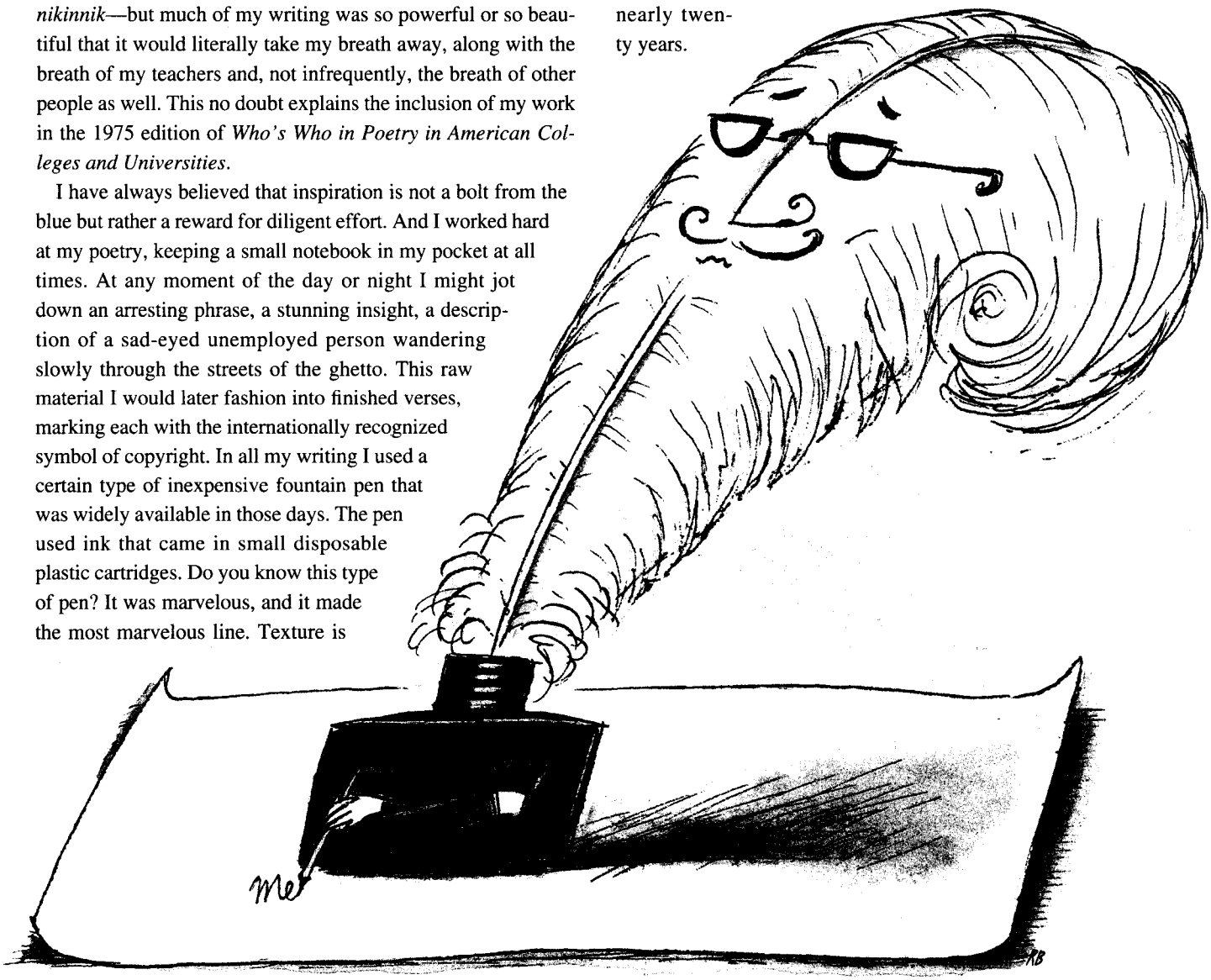

Illustration by Roxanna Bikadoroff

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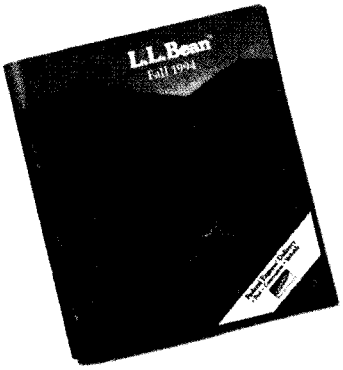
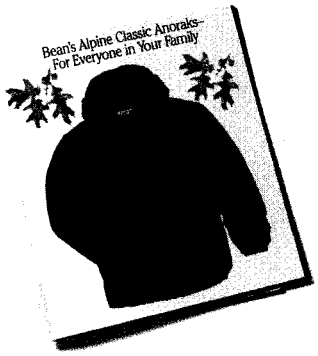
L.L.Discoveries



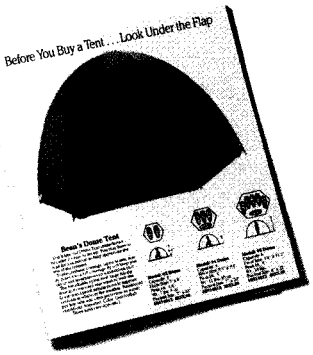
L.L.Change of Season

L.L.Places to Go

L.L.On the Road



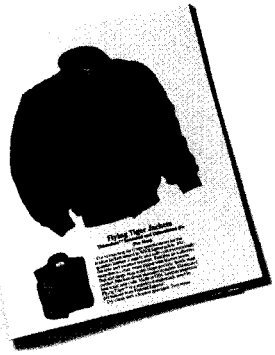
L.L.Down East



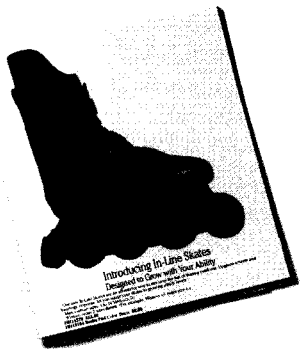
L.L.Outdoors

L.L.Indoors

L.L.After School

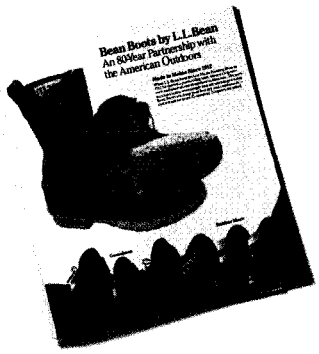


L.L.Classic

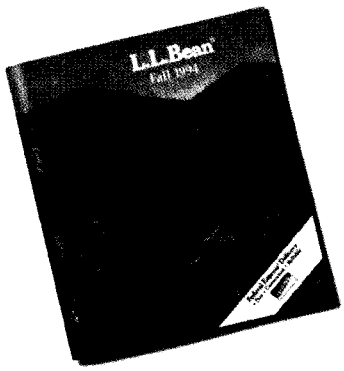


L.L.New

L.L.Perfect Fit



L.L.Guaranteed



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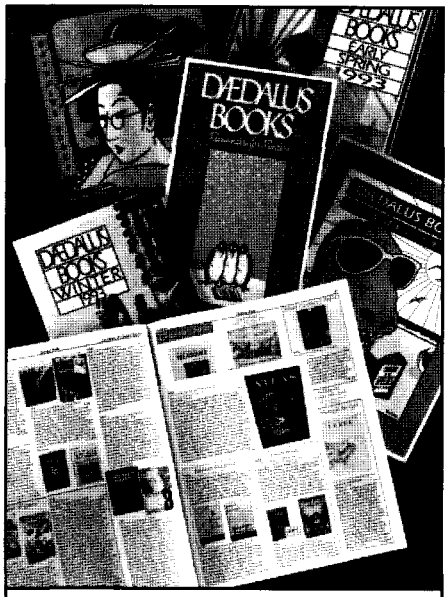

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My fingers tremble in anticipation of turning their age-cloaked pages. Before reveling in their glories, however, let me take a moment to describe my state of mind during the period of my greatest promise.

When I was in my teens and very early twenties, I possessed a sort of frightening sensitivity to various aspects of the human condition. Almost any sight or occurrence—a weeping old woman, a hungry child calling for her mother in the ghetto, the haughty sneer of a conceited cheerleader—could send me into throes of existential anomie. As a result, I often argued with my parents, who lacked even the most rudimentary appreciation of my gift, and whose only reaction when something of mine appeared in *Helicon* or *Kinnikinnik* was to offer uncomprehending congratulations and expressions of pride. Still, I frequently worried that aspects of my own family life and mental state appeared to be mild and ordinary in comparison with those of older writers who were generally considered to be "major" or "great." I comforted myself with the thought that I would probably become mentally ill at some later date, perhaps after graduating from college. Besides, isn't yearning to be mentally ill *itself* a form of mental illness?

Despite—or, no doubt, because of—my uncertain emotional condition, I won a remarkable number of poetry awards. These included the Virginia Scott Miner cup, the H. J. Sharp award, a handful of less significant prizes, and a gold-colored trophy in the shape of a nearly naked woman with wings. The trophy, which was inscribed "First Place—Free Verse," I kept on my dresser along with some arrowheads and a baseball autographed by Orlando Cepeda.

Now, let us select one of my old notebooks at random from the pile. This one will do nicely. I have chosen a blue composition book dating from my high school years, with an intriguing helical binding made of wire. When new, according to the legend on its cover, it contained ninety-six sheets and cost forty-nine cents. Roughly two thirds of the pages appear to be missing. Inscribed on the cover is the date 1972 and the designation "Biology I." I am now turning to the heart of the notebook, to examine the rich ore it contains.

I am skimming now. Hmmm, hmmm, hmmm, hmmm, hmmm, hmmm, hmmm.

Well. Hmmm. I must confess that I am somewhat surprised. On the other hand, we do not expect the fledgling to sing with the full-throated ease of the mother or father bird. Besides, the period of my greatest promise came somewhat later, when I was in college. In the pile of notebooks on my desk I now see one whose binding I recognize as French. It is a *cahier* that I bought while studying in Paris, during the summer following my freshman year. Paris!

I am removing the French notebook from the pile. I am turning the pages now.

A thought occurs: We read the notebooks of a great poet *because* of their imperfections, do we not? We study them because we wish to examine the seams and joints not visible in the finished work—to see how the thing is done. For precisely this reason it is to the finished work that we must ultimately turn. Luckily, as it happens, I have also come across numerous well-preserved copies of *Helicon* and *Kinnikinnik*. What a cascade of mental imagery the unexpected appearance of their covers engenders in my mind! Let me select a sample from the pile.

Those old notebooks—those glowing forges of my imagination—are piled on my desk as I write this.

Hmmm, hmmm, hmmm, hmmm, hmmm, hmmm, *hmmm*.

I am sometimes asked to explain how I happened to abandon, during my junior year in college, the writing of poetry for (as it turned out) drinking beer and having sex. I can offer no rational account. For is not poetry a gift that we have no power either to accept or to decline? Yes, it is. I can say only that what is done outside the realm of conscious action cannot be undone within it, and vice versa. Besides, is not the promise of genius, in a very real sense, as lovely a thing as genius itself? It is as precious as the dew on a flower, the sun on a cloud, the smile on the face of a child. My old notebooks and published works—bright strands in the many-hued tapestry of my imagination—do not even begin to tell the story.

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OCTOBER
1994

Arts & Entertainment

PREVIEW

Classical

Homage to a Sovereign of the Violin

Pop

Ditties from a Dustbowl Diary

Jazz

A Little Big Band Breaks Out

Film

Redford Takes on Television

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Classical Music

BY AUSTIN BAER

A RIGHT ROYAL TRIBUTE

"He is the king," says Pinchas Zukerman, and who would disagree? In the words of the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, the name of the stone-faced Jascha Heifetz (1901–1987) is "synonymous with violinistic perfection." Not that he was universally loved. Heifetz made no appeal to sentiment (though he did record "White Christmas"), and there were listeners who found him cold. But none denied the grandeur of his conceptions or the mesmerizing beauty of his tone. His recordings, beginning in 1917 and reaching clear to 1972, encompass virtually the entire standard repertoire, including significant additions to the literature commissioned by Heifetz himself. The list of major works he might have played but did not is short: the concerti of Berg and Schoenberg (the scores of which he repeatedly bought, studied, and discarded) and Bartók (for which he expressed admiration). This month BMG Classics/RCA Victor Gold Seal releases state-of-the-art transfers of the entire recorded legacy on sixty-five remastered compact discs. The full set, fit for a king, is being marketed as *Jascha Heifetz—The Complete Collection*, and comes with a commemorative medal.

Jascha Heifetz

RCA VICTOR GOLD SEAL

ODE TO HUMANITY: TOKYO STRINGS TAKE ACTION

The Tokyo String Quartet

MARTHA SWOPE

Having reached the quarter-century mark, the Tokyo String Quartet is celebrating by revisiting the string quartets of Beethoven—an inexhaustible repertoire, supremely suited to the players' high seriousness. Complete cycles (six evenings each) have been offered in such illustrious halls as Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and the Konzerthaus in Vienna. In the United States the Tokyo will perform the cycle in an unprecedented joint series of concerts at *both* of New York City's premier venues: Carnegie Hall (October 26, February 8, March 1; call 212-247-7800) and Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall (November 16, January 18, May 10; call 212-721-6500). A further cycle follows in Palm Springs, California (February 11–18; call 619-325-4490). The quartet is generously donating the proceeds from its New York programs to Classical Action: Performing Arts Against AIDS. Beethoven, fighter for the ideal of universal brotherhood, would surely approve.

AN AMERICAN VOICE RETURNS

The American soprano Sylvia McNair, whose limpid tones, rapt phrasing, and lovely presence have touched audiences from Glyndebourne and Salzburg to Tanglewood, has been a comparatively rare visitor to the concert stages of the United States. Now her calendar is full of American dates. In the fall she sings Mahler and Mozart with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (October 20–25), Ravel and Berlioz with the Cleveland Orchestra (December 1–3), and in between a series of solo recitals in Eugene, Oregon; San Francisco; Torrence, California; St. Louis; and New York (Alice Tully Hall).

CHRISTIAN STEINER

THE OTHER OTELLO

What's in a name? For Rossini's once-popular *Otello* (1816), a big image problem. Of the countless operas derived from Shakespeare, none surpasses Verdi's genuinely Shakespearean *Otello* (1887); inevitably, Rossini's has had to languish in its shadow. For audiences versed in the play or the later opera, even the most exciting musical episodes of Rossini's first two acts are hobbled by a libretto that neither resembles nor improves on the source. Only in the third and final act do we reach familiar ground: Rossini's blameless Desdemona prepares for bed, sings her mournful Willow Song, and drifts off to sleep, shortly to be awakened by her husband, who has come to murder her in his jealous rage. But Rossini's sensitive portrait is set off by a stroke of genius all his own. "There is no greater sorrow," sings an unseen gondolier, heard through the chamber window, "than to recall, in wretchedness, the happy time"—words all too fitting for Desdemona's plight, cribbed from the *Divine Comedy*, and set to a melody of bone-weary gloom. Franz Liszt must have felt the magic of this moment; he, who poured his passion for opera into virtuoso piano paraphrases of music from the likes of *Don Giovanni* and *Rigoletto*, also recast the song of the gondolier as a sublime piano miniature. And Giacomo Meyerbeer, whose own operas certain Parisian contemporaries ranked with the masterworks of Michelangelo, called the last act of Rossini's *Otello* "godlike." Even if we take such judgment with a grain of salt, the rare chance to test it in the theater is welcome, and this month the San Francisco Opera provides it (October 4–28; for tickets call 415-864-3330).

Otello set model by Gerard Howland

BOB ESPARZA

Austin Baer is a New York–based writer.

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY ERIC FOWLER

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Popular Music and Jazz

BY BOB BLUMENTHAL AND CHARLES M. YOUNG

TRANCE OR DANCE

Energy seems to shift arbitrarily among musical forms from year to year. Metal-guitar virtuosos are doing everything that's wonderful for a time, and then the energy shifts to rap, and then to singer-songwriters. Right now the energy has alighted on the mysterious producers of dance music who evolved out of the rave movement with the mixed skills of DJs, musicians, and maestros of the soundboard. Among the foremost such producers is Alex Paterson, once a renowned remixer of hits by U2 and Depeche Mode, now the center of something that calls itself the Orb. On the Orb's fourth album, *Pomme Fritz* (Island), Paterson explores "ambient house," a descendant of dance music that has dispensed with the usual hydraulic beat. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine anyone but free-form yoga masters actually dancing to most of the passages on *Pomme Fritz*, a vast collage of techno-weirdness that owes more to avant-garde minimalists like Terry Riley and Steve Reich than it does to disco. What

VINCENT McDONALD

The Orb at the board

the album is good for, *wonderful* for, is trancing out. Turn down the lights, dig out your lava lamp from the sixties, and be transported to realms of awe, terror, mystery, and whimsy. If you like a bit more dance in your trance of neo-psychedelia, you may want to check out *Polyfusia* (Astralwerks), by Seefeel. The beat is a little more dub than industrial (in other words, lots of bass and a gentle pulse), but it will get you undulating in the hippie tradition of noodle dancing. The melodies, such as they are, generate images of a Martian funeral procession. **—C.M.Y.**

Bob Blumenthal is a jazz critic for The Boston Globe *and* CD Review.
Charles M. Young is a New York–based writer.

STRAIGHT SWING WITH A SWAGGER

Most of today's big bands are confined to their rehearsal space. If they're lucky, they get occasional work in their home cities. Few have had the wider impact of the Either/Orchestra, which does not let its Cambridge, Massachusetts, base deter it from winning jazz polls, garnering Grammy nominations, and regularly touring the country.

KEN WINOKUR

The Either/Orchestra

The ten-piece Either/Orchestra is the brainchild of Russ Gershon, who organized the group in 1985. Gershon not only recorded the band but also began touring (the Midwest starting in 1988, the West since 1990), making his Accurate label a haven for creative players and writers. Shortly after Labor Day, Accurate released *The Brunt*—the band's fifth album and the label's thirty-fourth—and the Either/Orchestra commenced its third West Coast tour, including six states and a stop at the thirty-seventh annual Monterey Jazz Festival.

The new album is prime Either/Orchestra, encompassing both jazz and non-jazz traditions, able to evoke vivid scenarios without sacrificing a roguish daring. The band extends the venerable swagger of Duke Ellington's "Blues for New Orleans" one moment, and the gruff elegance of Gershon's tenor saxophone on "Pas de Trois" the next. As usual, Gershon sustains a lean, declarative swing as he ushers in new members (including the trombonist Dan Fox, who wrote the ominous "Permit Blues"), features rich orchestrations from alumni (as on Curtis Hasselbring's title track), and gets old reliables like Charlie Kohlhase and John Carlson to go the distance once again. Above all, it's the leisurely spirit of Bob Dylan's "Lay Lady Lay," captured with an intelligent affection in Gershon's arrangement, that defines the Either/Orchestra's serious yet sunny personality. **—B.B.**

BORDELLO BLUES

If there's any justice in show biz, we'll one day see a hit Broadway musical called *Chippy*. In the meantime, we've got *Songs From Chippy* (Hollywood), a collection of tunes inspired by two sets of diaries (called "Bundles From Heaven" and "Parcels From Hell") by a Texas prostitute, known only as Chippy, who plied her difficult trade in the middle of the Dustbowl during the Depression, and certainly saw her share of misery. Yet the songs here reflect a character with a profound appreciation for beauty ("Thunderstorms and Neon Signs"), philosophy ("Fate with a Capital F"), and rage ("Tongues"). Some of the finest talents in country music are represented, and it's obvious that the diaries have fired up their creativity. Joe Ely has his deepest and eeriest moment in years on "Cold Black Hammer," a lament for laborers in the oil fields. Fellow Texans Butch Hancock and Wayne Hancock (no relation) also get back to their roots with some of the finest Texas swing since the demise of Bob Wills. But Jo Carol Pierce has the coolest song: "I Blame God." Chippy turns out to have been a folk theologian of surprising originality, giving her own hilariously defiant answer to the God of Job ("You'd have to be a deity to be this mean"). It should be required listening in every divinity school. **—C.M.Y.**

YATT McSPADDEN

Butch Hancock, Jo Harvey Allen, Joe Ely, and Terry Allen *(left to right)*

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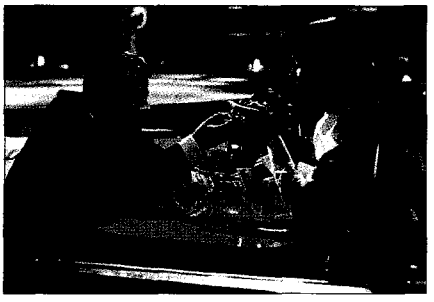
Film

BY ELLA TAYLOR

CANNES BEST-SELLER IS TONGUE IN CHIC

With his directing debut, *Reservoir Dogs*, Quentin Tarantino showed off his monster talents as a screenwriter and actor's director, along with a gift for orchestrating horror-movie set pieces of unparalleled elegance and repulsive sadism. In purely cinematic terms his new film, *Pulp Fiction*, which won the Palme d'Or at this year's Cannes Film Festival, borders on brilliance. The movie propels an all-star cast through a hail of bullets and wave after wave of razor-sharp dialogue in an anthology of three slyly interwoven stories about small-time thugs screwing up on the job. Bruce Willis is adorable as a double-dealing prize fighter. John Travolta and Samuel L. Jackson are spectacularly funny as a pair of chatty hit men, and Travolta has a wonderfully endearing turn in a twist contest with Uma Thurman where, for a moment, he becomes the king of cool we remember from *Saturday Night Fever* instead of a paunchy greaseball who can't do anything right. Gorgeous, witty, and sophisticated, *Pulp Fiction* pays homage to the action thriller even as it sends up its he-man excesses. Once again, though, Tarantino becomes trapped inside the genre he loves so much, notably in a scene that's a drearily expert variation on the infamous ear-chopping sequence from *Reservoir Dogs*. One wishes some astute mogul would throw money at Tarantino to make his next movie an homage to Eric Rohmer or Douglas Sirk. Enough B-movies, already.



Travolta and Thurman in *Pulp Fiction*

LINDA R. CHEN

ALL THE PRODUCERS' MEN

One of the more unsavory chapters in American media history, the story of the 1959 quiz-show scandals has enough built-in sleaze and intrigue to make the driest docudrama thrilling—and Robert Redford's argumentative *Quiz Show* is anything but dry. In the early 1950s, when network television was finding its feet, the producers and sponsors of popular live game shows like *Twenty-One* and *The $64,000 Question* began rigging programs by feeding correct answers to some contestants, turning them into champions and then paying them to lose. Based on a book by Richard Goodwin, a lawyer with the congressional subcommittee that investigated the scandals, Redford's movie tells the grimy tale at an exciting clip that never lets up, helped by a sharp script written by former *Washington Post* film critic Paul Attanasio. In the film, network television, "the largest classroom in the world," also displays itself as a fair-sized cesspool, while big business—represented by Geritol, a major television advertiser at the time—hardly comes off smelling like a rose. But the film offers more than the usual tale of corporate greed and corruption; it also examines the ways in which class and ethnic divisions cut into images of heroism in America. *Quiz Show* is the story of how one champion, the Jewish Herbert Stempel (played as an obnoxious loudmouth by John Turturro), is edged out in favor of a more decorative young literature professor, Charles Van Doren (*Schindler's List*'s Ralph Fiennes). Both are flawed men who allow their morals to be compromised by ambition, but the WASP cuts a finer figure on TV.

Winning isn't everything

BARRY WETCHER

Ella Taylor is a film columnist for Mirabella.

BEACHED IN L.A.

How does an unknown director with a shoestring budget put a fresh face on the Los Angeles riots for a public with an advanced case of media fatigue? Answer: view the riots from inside the groggy head of a white guy wasting his life on Venice Beach, turn it into black comedy, and stuff it with cameos by one's more visible pals from the biz (John Cusack, Ethan Hawke, Steve Buscemi, director Alex Cox, even Exene Cervenka). In Peter McCarthy's delightfully warped *Floundering*, John Boyz (played by James Le Gros with his usual where-the-hell-am-I élan) tries to get a grip on his Very Bad Day with aimless excursions into sex, drugs, and crime, while watching L.A. go through its own falling apart. Just when you think the film is about to grind down into a whining tract on white alienation, it shoots off into a surreal soap opera in which things get worse, worser, and then better, as John finds a way to feel good by making himself useful—and loved. In its jaundiced way (McCarthy has soaked up the crazed anarchy of *Repo Man* and *Sid and Nancy*, which he produced), *Floundering* is a story of liberation and an arch re-affirmation of the politically committed film.

James Le Gros

GREG HENRY

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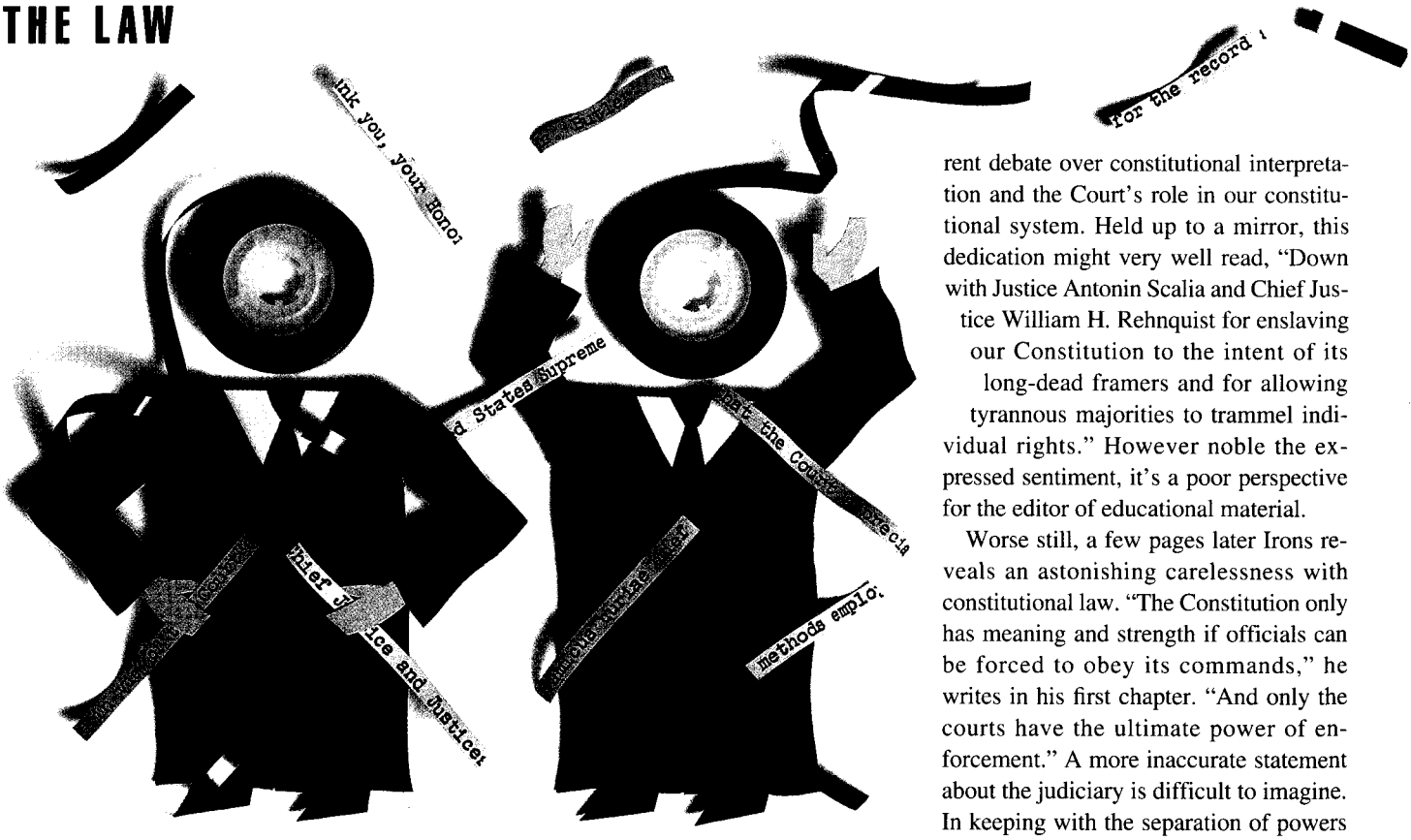

Electronic Hash

The much-heralded recordings of Supreme Court oral arguments flagrantly distort the record

by Edward Lazarus

As a former law clerk to Justice Harry A. Blackmun, I followed the publicity attending *May It Please the Court . . .*—Peter Irons's edited version of twenty-three famous Supreme Court oral arguments—with avidity. The snippets Nina Totenberg played on National Public Radio made great teasers. The journal of the American Bar Association lauded the tapes as "just the kind of learning tool that schools need to teach about the Constitution."

But what exactly are students of the Court listening to and absorbing? After all, Irons's tapes will surely be the closest most of his audience, even the lawyers, ever get to the Court itself. Did Irons—despite the enormous difficulty of reducing arguments to a quarter or less of their original size—really manage to capture the significance and complexity of many of the Court's most historic cases?

The answer is worse than I feared; and the publisher, The New Press (which according to the copyright page of the book accompanying the tapes is a "nonprofit" publishing house "operated editorially in the public interest"), should in good conscience issue a recall. Irons, a professor of political science at the University of California at San Diego, has pulled the wool over the eyes of a legal and journalistic community that is enthralled by the idea of his enterprise but has not bothered to check his work.

There is nothing inaccurate about Irons's dedication: "To Justice William J. Brennan, Jr., and Justice Thurgood Marshall, with gratitude and admiration for helping to preserve our Constitution as a living document that protects the rights and dignity of every American." But Irons could hardly have declared more clearly that he has taken sides in the current debate over constitutional interpretation and the Court's role in our constitutional system. Held up to a mirror, this dedication might very well read, "Down with Justice Antonin Scalia and Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist for enslaving our Constitution to the intent of its long-dead framers and for allowing tyrannous majorities to trammel individual rights." However noble the expressed sentiment, it's a poor perspective for the editor of educational material.

Worse still, a few pages later Irons reveals an astonishing carelessness with constitutional law. "The Constitution only has meaning and strength if officials can be forced to obey its commands," he writes in his first chapter. "And only the courts have the ultimate power of enforcement." A more inaccurate statement about the judiciary is difficult to imagine. In keeping with the separation of powers that underlies the entire structure of our government, the federal courts, including the Supreme Court, have no enforcement power and, as Hamilton emphasized in *The Federalist* 78, "neither FORCE nor WILL but merely judgment." Precisely because judges lack such power and, as Hamilton continued, "must ultimately depend upon the aid of the executive arm even for the efficacy of [their] judgments," we have entrusted these unelected officials with ultimate responsibility for defining our laws and Constitution.

But Irons could be forgiven this extraordinary judicial aggrandizement (which seems to inform his entire view of the Court), and his almost comic misstatement of the premise of *Marbury* v. *Madison* (no, this case was not even remotely about whether Congress has "the power to tell the Court how to decide cases that involved the executive branch"), and even his blithe acceptance of the dangerous oversimplification that "the law changes as judges and their prejudices change," *if only he hadn't messed with the tapes.*

But he did, blatantly and repeatedly. Irons did not edit the oral arguments—he fictionalized them. Through the magic of modern audio technology he cut and spliced to create seamless-sounding speeches that were never delivered and telling exchanges that never occurred. The

Illustrations by David McLimans

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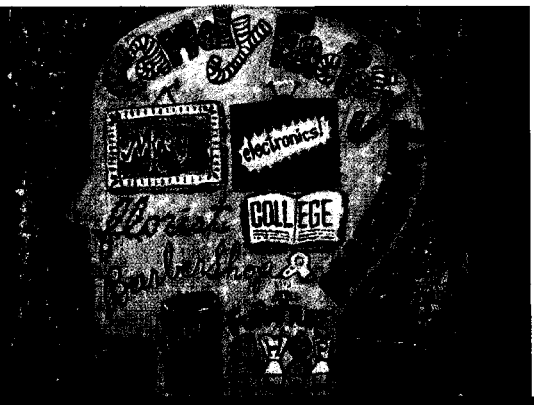

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order of arguments is switched around. Questions and answers are shuffled. Strong arguments are made to look weak, weak ones strong, and the tenor of many is so changed that they bear little resemblance to what was actually said in the courtroom. Upon careful examination of a representative sample, Irons's tapes turn out to be not Supreme Court history but rather an electronic hash heavily flavored with his own biases and predispositions.

THE argument in *Cooper* v. *Aaron*, the 1958 Little Rock desegregation case, which many have singled out as a highlight of the tapes, is painfully illustrative. The facts underlying this case compose one of the sorriest episodes in the struggle to desegregate public schools after the Court's landmark decision in *Brown* v. *Board of Education*. When the 1957 school year opened, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (represented by Thurgood Marshall) had obtained a court order to admit nine black students into Little Rock's previously all-white Central High School. In response, and apparently to ensure his own re-election, Orval Faubus, the governor of Arkansas, called out the National Guard, which, together with a racist mob, kept the black students out. Three weeks later a reluctant President Eisenhower dispatched U.S. Army paratroopers to escort the black students into Central High, where gangs of segregationist toughs subjected them (and any whites who made overtures to them) to a year of vicious harassment.

Against this background the Little Rock school board went to federal court, asking that the nine blacks be reassigned to segregated schools and that desegregation be delayed two and a half years. The federal district judge Harry Lemley, citing conditions of "chaos, bedlam, and turmoil," agreed to the postponement. The Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, however, reversed Judge Lemley, and the case moved to the Supreme Court.

Irons cut and spliced the oral arguments to create seamless-sounding speeches that were never delivered.

As Irons's *Cooper* v. *Aaron* tape begins, Irons himself, as the *You Are There*–style narrator, portentously sets the stage for the listener. "It's September 11, 1958," he intones. "The Court's regular term begins in October. But Chief Justice Earl Warren has called a special session for argument of this case."

After Irons summarizes the history of the case, the argument begins. Richard Butler, an attorney for the Little Rock school board, argues that the Court's own decisions contemplate gradualism in the desegregation process. In a passage lasting more than two minutes Butler tells the justices, in essence, that "'deliberate speed,' as used by this Court...allows for the flexibility and the [thirty-month] delay provided in the decision by District Judge Harry J. Lemley."

Irons as narrator then interrupts, telling the listener that "Butler asked for a stay of court orders while Arkansas lawmakers debated ways to block school integration. Chief Justice Warren did not conceal his doubts."

A colloquy ensues between Butler and Warren. Butler admits that the nine black students from Central High have been assigned to an all-black school for the coming year.

Warren: "Well, isn't that, isn't that action toward segregating them again?"

"Oh, yes, sir, it is," Butler responds.

Let's stop the "edited" tape here for a moment and check it and Irons's accompanying transcript against the original transcript of *Cooper* v. *Aaron*. The first thing we learn is that Irons never uses ellipses in his transcripts to indicate omissions. Although Butler did open his September 11 argument with the subject of gradualism, Irons has omitted numerous paragraphs from Butler's remarks, including several questions from Justice Felix Frankfurter and corresponding answers, all of which fall smack in the middle of what Irons presents as a single speech.

Even more misleading is Irons's presentation of Butler's subsequent colloquy with Warren. It did not happen—at least not on September 11. The exchange actually occurred two weeks earlier, on August 28, in an entirely separate oral argument involving the same parties but somewhat different issues.

You see, *Cooper* v. *Aaron* was an extraordinary case not only because of its intrinsic legal and political significance, not only because it is one of a handful of cases for which the Court convened a special session, and not only because the opinion is the only one ever to have been signed individually by all nine justices, but also because it was argued twice, for several hours on each occasion, in the span of two weeks.

WHAT happened is this: As noted above, the NAACP appealed Judge Lemley's decision to delay desegregation to the court of appeals, which reversed Lemley's ruling. At the same time, however, the court of appeals "stayed its mandate" (legal jargon for suspending the effect of its decision) pending consideration by the Supreme Court.

With the school year fast approaching, the stayed mandate (temporarily allowing Lemley's order to remain in effect) threatened to give the school board a substantial de facto victory. The Court ordinarily would not consider the school board's appeal for many months. Accordingly, the NAACP asked the Court either to order the court of appeals to lift the stay of its mandate immediately (thereby reversing Lemley's order) or to hear the merits of the delay issue before school opened.

This, then, was the situation on August 28, when the Court first heard from Butler, Marshall, and also Solicitor General J. Lee Rankin, on behalf of the United States. Late that same afternoon the justices met in conference and opted for the second alternative: to tackle the merits of the delay issue before the start of school. Immediate briefing was ordered and a second argument scheduled for September 11.

Now back to Irons's tape. After the colloquy with Warren, Butler's argument is broken into four additional speeches, punctuated by interruptions from Justice Frankfurter and Chief Justice Warren. Every word of these exchanges from Irons's "September 11" argument was actually spoken on August 28 (though within the August 28 material Irons has manufactured several juxtapositions). Furthermore, Irons gives Butler yet one more speech, which Irons as narrator

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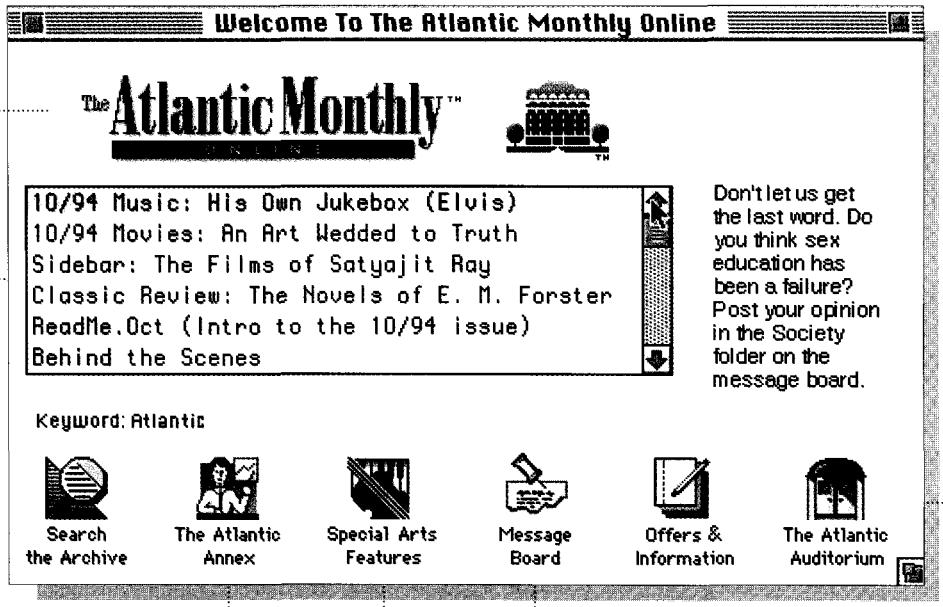

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calls Butler's "final appeal for delay," and which Irons as editor places neatly at the very end of his dummied-up September 11 session (that is, after remarks by Marshall and Rankin). This final appeal, too, was delivered on August 28.

Irons plays similar games with the three passages that Marshall delivers on the tape. The first speech, two eloquent paragraphs recounting the ordeal of his student-clients, is actually an excerpt from Marshall's opening remarks on August 28 thrown together with material from Marshall's September 11 argument.

What Irons includes as Marshall's second speech was in fact delivered on September 11. But then Irons puts us back in the time tunnel. What purports to be Marshall's third and final speech is from August 28.

Is Irons guilty of something more than gulling listeners into thinking that they're hearing the actual proceedings?

LET us return to poor Richard Butler and the colloquy with Warren in which he agrees, almost gloatingly ("Oh, yes, sir, it is"), that the school board is trying to resegregate its schools. What Irons omits (again without ellipses) is the rest of Butler's sentence: "Oh, yes, sir. It is, it is, and that was done under the order of Judge Lemley's decision." And here is an instance where the difference between August 28 and September 11 matters. On August 28 the Court was in the position of trying to figure out what would happen if it did not order the court of appeals to lift the stay of its mandate—and the answer Butler gave (not gloatingly but simply as a matter of fact) was that under Lemley's still-standing order the black students would be assigned to an all-black school. By September 11 the issue of what would happen if the Court did not act had become irrelevant. The Court had already decided to act—to decide for itself before the start of school the merits of Judge Lemley's delay ruling. In other words, by inverting chronology and carefully splicing, Irons makes Butler out to be a segregationist heavy—a fact many times belied in the Court on both August 28 and September 11.

Irons keeps his thumb on the scale throughout the argument. In the very next speech, which Irons as narrator introduces as "Butler restat[ing] his appeal for delay," Irons as editor has Butler arguing that "it is impossible for the school board of Little Rock to operate a school program for the two thousand students at Central High School on an integrated basis at this time. . . ." But Irons as editor has snipped off the beginning of Butler's sentence. What he really said was that "Judge Lemley found, and also the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals found, that it is impossible for the school board. . ." In short, far from expressing his own opinion as to the state of the Little Rock schools, Butler was engaged in the much more neutral activity of restating the findings of the lower courts.

Even these low blows don't satisfy Irons. Here is how Irons as narrator shapes the rest of Butler's argument.

After Butler argues that the Court's decisions have been ambiguous, Irons as narrator tells us that "Justice Felix Frankfurter had little sympathy."

After Butler suggests that without further delay in implementing desegregation Little Rock's school system will be destroyed, Irons as narrator tells us that "Chief Justice Warren did not want mobs to decide legal questions."

Before what Irons as editor inaccurately portrays as Butler's September 11 summation, Irons as narrator tells us that "Butler's final argument provoked a heated reply from Warren."

The problem here is not that the Court never expressed frustration and even anger at some of Butler's arguments. It did. No, the problem is overkill: the selection of Butler's worst moments from several hours of argument and Irons's narrative suggestions that the listener, like the justices, should dismiss what Butler is saying.

Contrast this with Irons's loaded narration of Marshall's presentation. Before Marshall's opening,

Narrator: "Thurgood Marshall speaks for Little Rock's black children. . . ."

Before Marshall's second and most substantive speech,

Narrator: "Marshall spoke to the Court like a teacher."

And before Marshall's third and final soliloquy,

Narrator: "Marshall appealed to the rule of law."

Notably, the real oral argument in *Cooper* v. *Aaron* is much more interesting and dramatic than the good guys–bad guys cartoon Irons offers. As the Court recognized again and again in the course of the argument, Butler was not advocating racism. His client, the school board, was not party to the militant defiance of Governor Faubus and the bigoted mobs he incited, nor did Butler defend them. Before the Court, Butler claimed no more than that given Arkansas politics of the moment, desegregation should be delayed to avoid further violence in the schools. Whatever the merits of this position, Butler presented it to the Court in good faith and, far from what one would think after hearing Irons's tape, the Court accepted it in precisely that way.

The real argument in* Cooper *v.* Aaron *is much more dramatic than Irons's good guys–bad guys cartoon.

On the other side, Thurgood Marshall, though supremely lawyerly, was even more impassioned than he seems in Irons's version. After reading the full transcript, one readily understands why many consider him the finest lawyer of our time. Why Irons thought he could improve on the real Marshall is beyond me.

THE polishing up of other performances, though, is more easily explained. Take the argument of the radical attorney William Kunstler (in *Texas* v. *Johnson*) that Texas's criminal law against flag burning violated the free-speech rights of his client Gregory Lee Johnson. Irons's Kunstler "jumps" on a concession from the other side, "attacked" the Texas law, and "debated" with Chief Justice Rehnquist in the course of four long set speeches and one brief exchange. What Kunstler really did was make an ass of himself, cavalierly alienating the bench in a close and important case, which Johnson won 5–4 despite his lawyer, not because of him.

Here, too, Irons demonstrates his unique sense of chronology. The three paragraphs of what he presents as Kunstler's second speech are spread over nine pages of the actual Supreme Court transcript, and not in the same order (the

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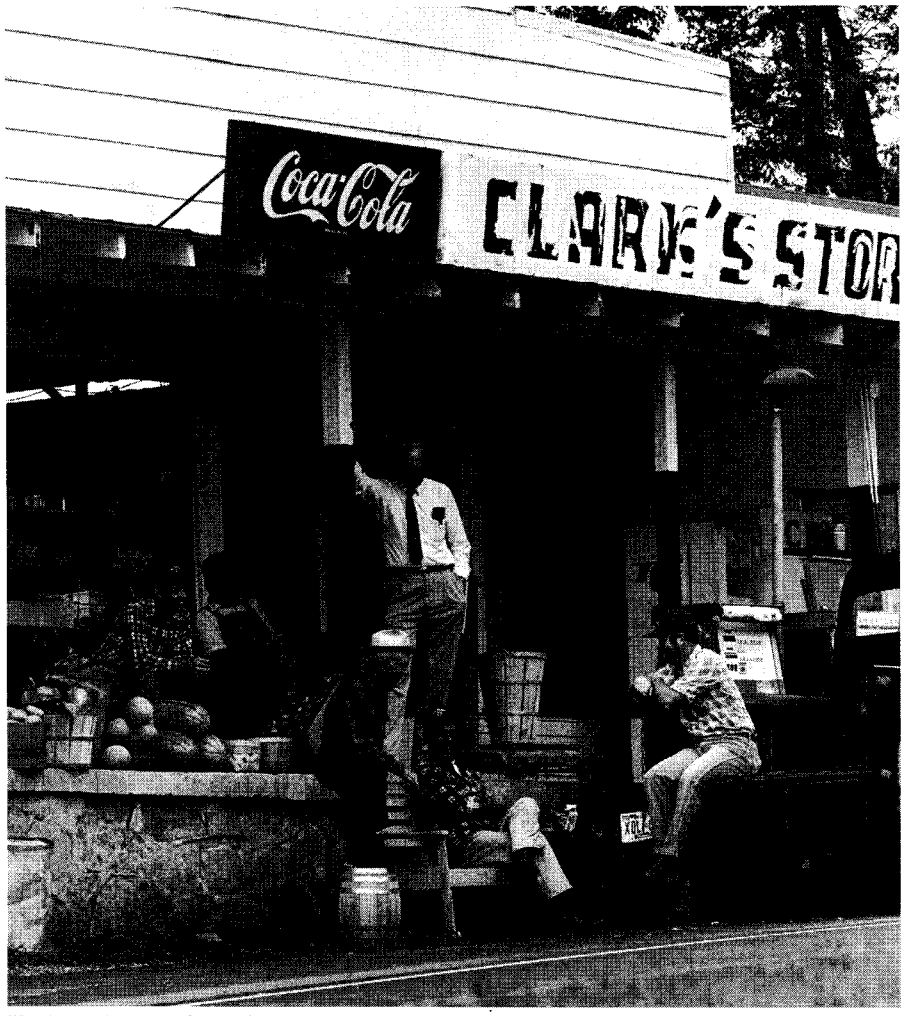
first paragraph appears on page 30, the second on page 39, the third on page 35).

And the parts of the argument Irons chooses to omit are telling. Is it mere coincidence that in Kunstler's debate with Rehnquist, Irons's one and only cut happens to be the part where Rehnquist catches Kunstler fudging the holding in a key precedent? Irons also omits the portions of the argument in which Kunstler starts commenting on the oral argument in the case that preceded his on the Court's docket and in which he repeatedly insults the sensibilities of those justices—including the potential swing vote Justice John Paul Stevens—who happen to regard the American flag with somewhat greater reverence than Kunstler does.

Instead Irons focuses on Kunstler's long rhetorical tributes to the First Amendment. These jury speeches, full of legal pabulum but containing little hard reasoning, may impress high school students, but they didn't impress the justices. Inadvertently, I suspect, these speeches raise one of the more interesting issues posed by Kunstler's performance—namely, whether advocates who, like Kunstler, are seeking as much to vindicate a political cause as to win the case at hand tend to be ineffective advocates before the Court.

I could go on bewailing what might have been had Irons put aside his ideal of the Supreme Court as all-powerful knight errant and simply let the arguments speak for themselves. I could raise other quibbles, such as Irons's dangerously erroneous suggestion that *Roe* v. *Wade* "struck a compromise" on the crucial question of whether a fetus is a "person" under the due-process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. *Roe*'s unequivocal conclusion that a fetus is not such a "person" constitutes one of the most important features of the Court's decision. Instead I would like to thank Irons for giving me a reason to review the actual oral arguments for myself. We may not have had in the modern era a Daniel Webster, bringing the audience to tears with his closing in the *Dartmouth College* case ("It is, sir, as I have said, a small college, and yet there are those who love it"); still, the arguments bring to life many of the legal giants of our own age: Archibald Cox, Anthony Amsterdam, Justices Harlan, Black, Warren. These advocates and jurists are only diminished by Irons's tawdry effort to improve on history.



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Capsule Cure

A night in one of Japan's kapuseru hoteru—*a field hospital for trade warriors*

by Steven Wardell

THE heart of Tokyo's business district, Shinjuku, is a congested, confusing realm where winding streets converge. One will lead to the Green Plaza Capsule Hotel, my destination for the night.

A *bijinesuman* and two colleagues emerge from a cramped basement bar. The leader pauses halfway up the white-tiled stairway to throw up on his shoes, and then sinks to his knees. Shaking off help, he continues his wobbly ascent. His followers succeed in reaching the top, whereupon they wipe off their ankles with delicate silk handkerchiefs. Arm in arm, the tipsy three jostle each other into a nearby office building and then into an elevator with me. One of them presses the fourth-floor button: KAPUSERU HOTERU. It is 11:30 P.M.

The doors snap open onto a bright, clean, quiet lobby, where the elevator's beery smell quickly dissipates. Half a dozen subdued men in charcoal or blue business suits and stocking feet are lined up at the registration desk. I deposit my shoes at the shoe-check window and join them. As they wait, the men watch two television screens suspended above the registration desk. The sets display strategically blurred American pornographic videos.

I am noticed immediately. The clerk calls to the back room, and the manager emerges to open up a new check-in line, just for me. The manager wants to make sure I'm in the right place. Twice he points to his desk and says, "*Kapuseru hoteru.*" I nod in turn. He asks hopefully, "*Kapuseru ja nai?*" ("Not capsule?") A toothy grin: You're not, after all, interested in checking in, are you?

"*Hai, kapuseru,*" I correct him.

The manager sucks his teeth for a few seconds, while the clerk glances at him sideways. In desperation he tosses out a few English words. "Understand . . . *hmmmmm* . . . unusual hotel."

"*Hai,*" I say. "I understand."

I am here to experience the uniquely Japanese capsule hotel, totally foreign to my notion of an overnight stay. Beyond the lobby, I know, are hundreds of tiny prefabricated units, roughly three feet by three feet by six feet six inches, stacked two-high like Pullman berths. Or, as I can also picture them, like a double row of coffins, pointed feet-first toward the aisle.

I pre-pay about $40 for the night. Escorting me to the locker room, the manager straps a locker key on my wrist with a

Above, capsuleers at Tokyo's Green Plaza: solitary, but not alone

Photographs by Michael Yamashita

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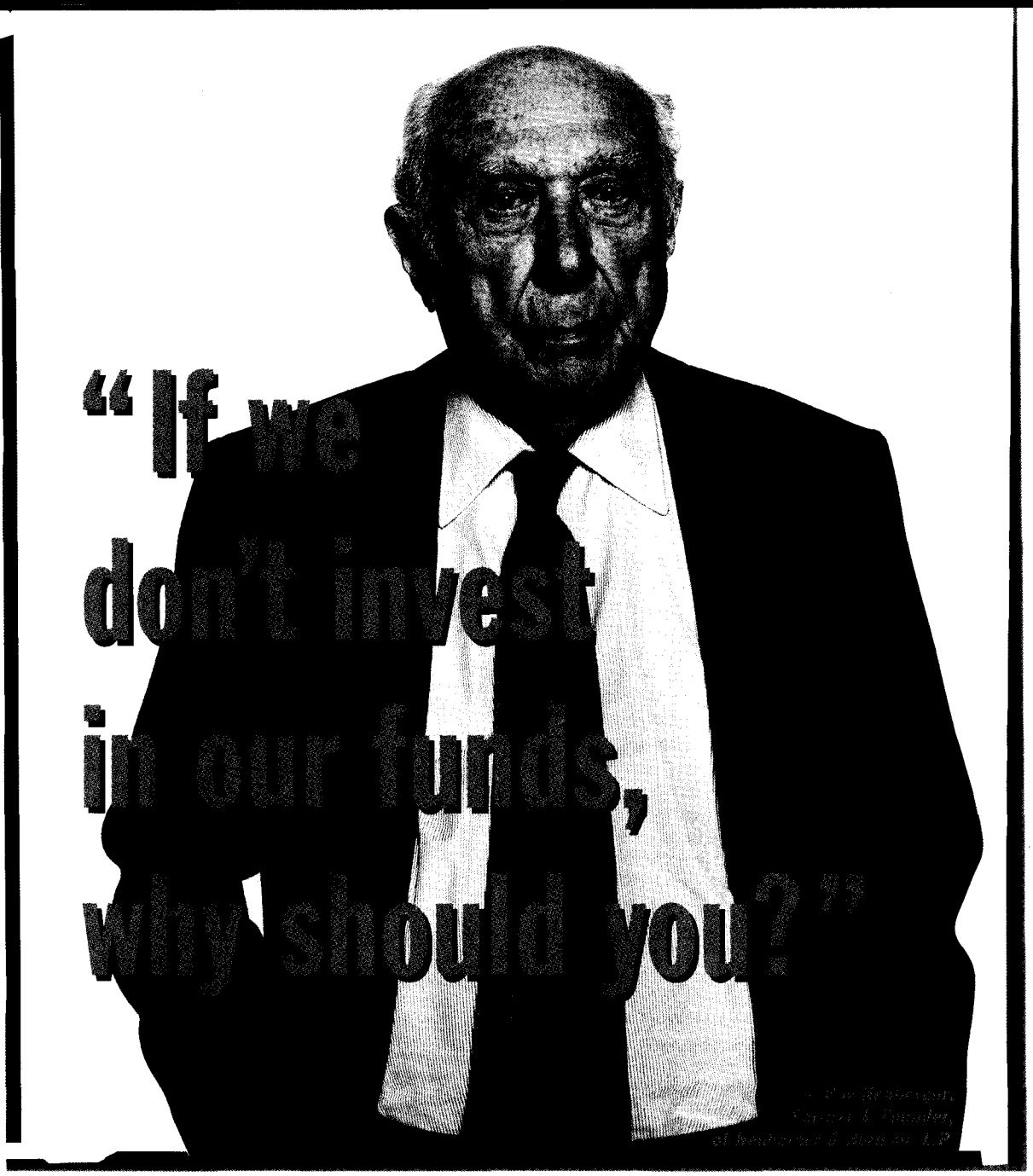

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Velcro band. These babying precautions are not only for foreigners but for all guests, because they're likely to be drunk and unconcerned about their own safety.

Over the public-address system a soft, sexy woman's voice repeats the instructions every few minutes: change into the underpants and happi coat provided by the hotel and lock up everything else. Men change at their lockers in awkward slow motion, requiring the support of the walls and the guidance of the sweet-sounding voice as they take ten minutes, on average, to do the job. Some keep up a slow, friendly banter—not the common talk of friends but more like that of off-duty soldiers, bonded by their escape to this capsule retreat. They are here with their comrades. They are safe now, among allies.

Uninhibitedly nude, they pause for long blank stretches before putting on fresh blue boxer shorts and a skimpy white happi coat that resembles a hospital gown. (No provision is made for women guests at the Green Plaza; none are expected.) They are reassessing themselves, changing modes, transforming themselves from businessmen into recuperating capsuleers. One jovial elderly guest tries to carry his wrist bag—with his money, keys, business cards, status-brand gum, and train pass—beyond the locker room. He has not fully changed, but he has already locked his locker. An employee solicitously reminds him that he will surely lose his wrist bag. Pleased by the special attention, the old man donates his wrist bag to the startled employee, pats him on the hand, and coos words of gratitude.

The employee is far younger than the client but uses the voice of an elder brother to stop the old man and instruct him to finish changing. After the white-haired guest has donned his uniform, the staffer Velcroes the key back onto his wrist, wipes his nose for him, and leads him to the next stop.

The manager, who has supervised my metamorphosis, points me toward the rest of the hotel. As I enter the common room, *Dallas* is playing on the television. Bivouacking businessmen watch from lounge chairs, encircled by vending machines that sell sodas, pep drinks, isotonic drinks, hot drinks, dried squid, seaweed, Cheez Doodles, and chocolate bars. After I have taken a seat, one of the TV-watchers, Takeshi Matsuoka, leans over to speak to me in English. A clean-cut, pleasant-looking man, he surprises me, not just because he's speaking English but because everyone except the manager has studiously ignored the foreigner, and I have just gotten used to that.

Matsuoka is not one of the drunks. Tomorrow he will attend a seminar here in Shinjuku at 6:00 A.M. Because he lives in Chiba, a far suburb, there is, he says, no train early enough. He is not pleased about the hour set for the meeting or about having to pay for a hotel. He asks why I'm here.

I explain that I want to experience something uniquely Japanese. To me this hotel seems a symbol of modern Japan—its crowding, but also its group spirit, sacrifice, and practicality. "Don't you have the same thing in America?" Matsuoka asks. I tell him that we probably never will, because in America staying in a capsule hotel would be an admission of failure, suggesting an inability to afford something grander, plus a drinking problem. "In Japan a capsule hotel is a sign of victory," Matsuoka counters. "It's a major convenience and a triumph of efficiency. Some *bijinesuman* stay in capsules half the week to avoid a long commute. They like watching TV instead of standing for two hours on a crowded train. Peak use is Wednesday and Thursday nights, when some workers may stay at their desks past eleven and then find themselves too tired to go home. But this is Friday, so many are here tonight because of too much drink."

After *Dallas* these common-room convalescents watch two more American shows dubbed in Japanese—one about a horse farm in the Midwest, the other about a private eye in California. During a commercial break I hear the rousing music of the Regain march, advertising a pep tonic. The ad portrays a businessman sallying forth, larger than life, to conquer the world, lightning flashing from his eye, attaché case and a yellow-and-black bottle of Regain in his hands.

Matsuoka translates the first stanza and the refrain for me:

> "Yellow and black is the sign of courage. Can you fight for twenty-four hours? Regain, Regain, our Regain. In the attaché case put the sign of courage. Can you fight all over the world?
>
> "Businessman, businessman, Japanese businessman."

BAREFOOT like everyone else, I visit the lavatory-washroom and find two flip-flop slippers outside the entrance. (In Japan a lavatory's ceramic floors are "not clean" by convention, and require their own slippers.) The man before me must have put on two left slippers; I slip into the remaining pair of right ones. The bare, peach-tiled washroom dispenses free disposable toothbrushes. Paste has already been applied, presumably in case an unsteady guest can't get it together.

Two floors above, a dozen men float on their backs, arms propped on the edges of three white-tiled hot pools, each a yard or so deep and a little larger than a king-size bed. Two young women in white slacks provide massages in open stalls, where men lie on gurneys, partly covered by towels. A weight machine and an exercise bicycle occupy a room to the side, along with do-it-yourself hair-care stations stocked with combs in an ultrasound sterilizer and a variety of mousses, gels, and hair tonics. The blue glow from a tanning booth chills the white walls of the room. If anyone still has work to do—and is fit to do it—the hotel is prepared. Private studies the size of a couple of phone booths are each furnished with a desk, a chair, and a banker's lamp.

Continuing my tour of the hotel, I descend a flight to the restaurant. At 1:30 A.M. businessmen are relaxing after a light meal by taking off their happi coats and tipping back in their chairs. The restaurant is very simple, serving mostly noodles. Its decor includes a fake fireplace and small tables spread over a large carpeted area. On each table free cigarettes are stuffed into a beer glass, and there are dispensers for disposable chopsticks and toothpicks. The tables form a semicircle around a TV broadcasting a golf match from Scotland. The men laugh, josh each other, smoke, slurp noodles—enjoying themselves as if among pals. Some of the older troops play go.

I can't read the menu, so I order ramen, a noodle dish for 550 yen (more than $5). The waiter writes my wristband number on the bill. I will pay in the morning, in exchange for my shoes. The fellow next to me falls asleep, his forehead slowly descending into his bowl. The waiter deftly cradles the head, removing it from the bowl, and rests it sidelong on the table without waking the man up. I try to start a conversation in English—my Japanese

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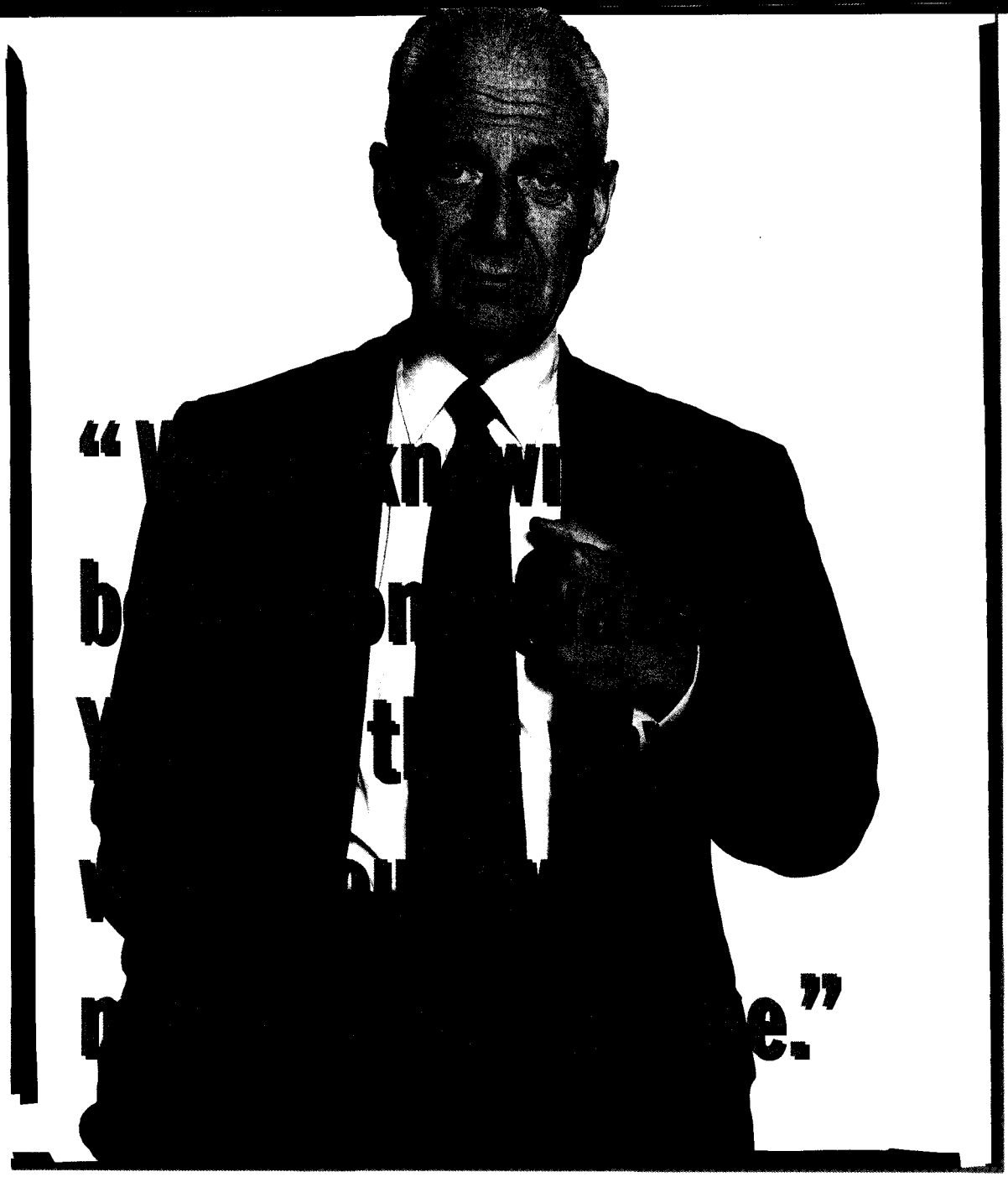

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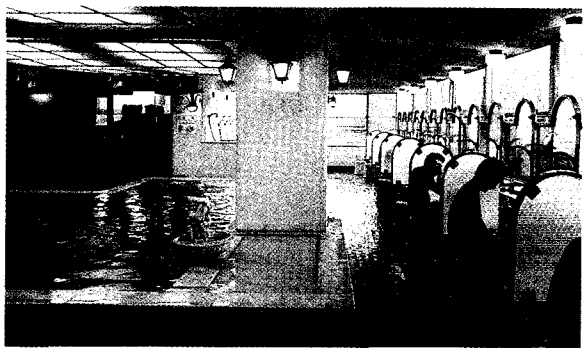


Weary businessmen prepare for the hot tub

isn't good enough—with several apparently inert men sitting near me. The third time I succeed. My question is "Why are you here tonight?" This one smiles and slowly explains in English: "To . . . *not* the wife."

Glass walls separate the restaurant from a room on the same floor where fifty patrons rest on fully reclined chaises. Closely packed, the chaises resemble deck chairs around a pool. The lights are on, and noise travels through the glass from the restaurant's television and noodle-slurpers, yet most of the patrons seem able to sleep. They are restless, though, tossing their arms and legs across their comrades. The bodies slump, twist, and contort, as if writhing from some form of shell shock—casualties, one might think, of Japan's international trade wars.

At 3:00 A.M. the restaurant area is as full as ever. Why aren't they asleep? Most of them could be at home in bed by now. These men are putting something off, deliberately not surrendering to sleep. They prefer to lie paralyzed in front of the TV. Most of them are still up at 3:30, when I withdraw to my capsule.

THE hotel's stacks of beige plastic capsules are located within an angular labyrinth, eerily reminiscent of a columbarium or a morgue. To enter an upper capsule, you climb two steps on a small ladder attached at one side of the lower capsule's square opening and then twist sideways to sit on the edge of the upper opening. Then you lean back and launch yourself in headfirst, horizontally. Presumably the less athletically inclined guests (not to mention the drunk ones) are assigned to bottom-level capsules, for reasons of triage.

The smell inside the capsule is a mixture of chlorine vapors descending from the bath area, the soaps and deodorants of the capsuleers, and the new-car smell of the fresh, shiny capsules themselves. A one-inch-thick futon slightly cushions the length of the capsule. After scooting backward inside, you lean forward and pull down a translucent plastic shade to cover the opening. But the shade doesn't shut out the presence of the bodies surrounding you. Like a high-tech pup tent, the capsule shuts out nothing except the view.

At the entrance, where the foot of the bed is located, a white bedsheet and a beige blanket lie folded together like computer paper. I am more than six feet tall, and although the capsule is barely long enough, the covers aren't. If I pull the sheet and blanket up to cover the top of my chest, they slide off my toes, which then catch a breeze from the aisle just outside. Inside the capsule there is room for only a few activities, most of which require you to prop yourself up on one elbow. The capsule contains a television, a radio, a mirror, a shelf for toiletries, a reading light, an alarm clock, and a fire alarm (with a no-smoking sign). The speaker for the television is positioned right next to your ear, so that the sound won't annoy others (except that it does). Among the offerings are the same pornographic videos being shown above the registration desk.

If that is not enough, perhaps a massage

All around me is snoring. The vibrations feel as though my comrade on the left were shoveling the phlegm in his nasal cavity back and forth. He almost swallows it on the intake. When he exhales, it flaps out at the edge of his nostrils before he catches it and breathes it back in. The noise is loud.

Somewhere very close, two men are snoring alternately at the same speed. One snores "*zzzzz*" in and breathes out silently, by which time the other is snoring inward. Together they generate a constant dull growl that sounds as though I were sitting near the jet engines on an airplane.

From the capsules come the sounds of:

—a cellophane wrapper being torn and wadded

—squid being chewed for a very long time by someone who doesn't shut his mouth

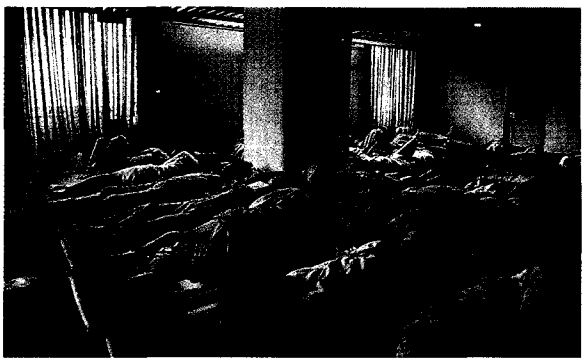
—a televised sports game of some sort

—teeth being brushed (someone has returned from the washroom with the toothbrush still in his mouth)

—heavy breathing.

I feel the press of bodies: five human beings within three radial feet of me. Each has a force that extends three feet all around and presses against my force, my personal space. I feel uncomfortable. I also think I'm the only one feeling this way.

The person below me shifts violently against the side of his capsule, shaking mine. Something that can only be his face smacks the plastic wall like a slab of ham. I feel him drag his arm along the capsule's squeaky-clean wall. Someone struggles to close the shade at the foot of his capsule. Hooking the latch at the bottom is the only complicated operation in the whole hotel. Each attempt sends the spring-loaded shade chattering up like a machine gun. He is successful on his eighth try. "*Ehche ehche ehcheche*": the



Succumbing to a pre-capsule nap

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sound of dry retching issues from another capsule. Someone shifts from side to side all night. A distant TV broadcasts until morning; that guy must have fallen asleep watching the palm-sized screen suspended less than two feet from his face.

In the morning everyone leaves quickly, quietly, separately, without even a nod to last night's comrades. Girding themselves anew in their business suits, some of the men depart to face the family for a weekend. Others will return to the front lines. They try hard to organize themselves and their clothing, clearly not quite ready for Tokyo and the renewal of their struggle. As the occupants leave, ancient, sexless *obāsans* ("grandmothers") in face masks and rubber gloves whip out the washable futons and sheets and swab the insides of the capsules. These tiny ladies rouse the heaviest sleepers, including me, by twisting our feet like a steering wheel.

The late risers slip into the locker room, where the public-address system emits the bright sound of chirping birds. A woman's voice, quivering with emotion, interjects "*Ohaiyo gozaimasu*" ("Good morning") at intervals. On the way out rumpled or dirtied guests can buy new shirts at reasonable prices, and also socks and boxer shorts, or a Hanes undershirt that calls itself a "great American original." A dry-cleaning service has opened out of nowhere in a corner of the registration area. You do not have to take your sweaty, vomit-encrusted clothes home or to the office. They will be ready when you next check in.

The elevator whisks my comrades from their capsule stronghold. Out of the little black handbags that they clutch to their chests come sunglasses, useful defenses against the sun's bright attack. Some stop to buy a "wellness" drink from a vending machine on the street.

Beyond the sanitized capsule refuge the city, too, has been refreshed. This busy consumer area of Tokyo is once again litterless and sparkling. The men of Mister Donut are scrubbing their sidewalk. Japan is neat and cute again. Last night's dank confusion has been transformed into a shopping mecca for Saturday-morning homemakers—the industrial warriors' wives. The throbbing hum of Tokyo continues, at a different pitch.

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Oh, to Be in Antigua

This Caribbean island makes an Englishman feel right at home

by Geoffrey Wheatcroft

IN Auden's poem the little Portuguese outpost of Macao, across the water from Hong Kong, was "A weed from Catholic Europe [that] took root / Between the yellow mountains and the sea /. . . And grew on China imperceptibly." Visiting Antigua, in the Leeward Islands, for the first time, I remembered those lines.

Antigua is a famously beautiful island, whose winter sunshine, 365 beaches ("one for every day of the year," as you are rather often told), and variety of scenery draw grateful visitors. The eighteenth-century charm of English Harbour, on the south of the island, is one attraction. Another is the slightly seedier charm of the capital, St. John's. The capital is almost comically miniature in scale. The buildings, in a pleasant, unassuming colonial style, are rarely more than two stories high. You don't notice how small they are until the cruise liners arrive from Miami. In a big port these ships seem in scale. Here they are wildly out of proportion, overtopping the town itself by what seems like a mile.

You can walk round the town in no time at all, maybe pausing for a little shopping, and then rent a car—or a mini-jeep, which is the best way to see the island. Seeing it can be done quickly. You can drive round the coast in an afternoon or, better, circumnavigate Antigua by sailboat in a long day. Or the island can be explored slowly, to discover the varieties of landscape and seascape.

For Americans, Antigua has the great practical advantages of proximity (less than five hours by air from New York), of employing English as its language (spoken in an exhilarating patois), and of the universal use of U.S. dollars as an alternative (and, to be honest, preferred) currency. But as I wandered round Antigua, I wondered if most Americans might not miss something. They wouldn't know the intimate connection that history has given this West Indian island with (dare I call it?) the Old Country, and especially with the west of England, Bath and northern

ALASTAIR BLACK/TONY STONE WORLDWIDE; ABOVE: JOAN IACONETTI

Top, the Shirley Heights barracks. Above, the two bays of English Harbour, seen from the heights

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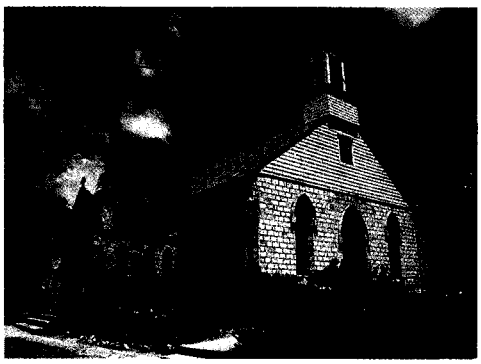
Somerset, where I live. Americans may not easily see that this hot, pretty island, with its black-African population, is in its way a shoot of England which took root thousands of miles away and grew on the Caribbean imperceptibly.

NOT that its name is English. Like so many other place-names in what is now Anglo-America, from San Francisco to Trinidad ("Saint Francis" to "Trinity"), the name testifies to the Hispanic Catholic origins of early explorations. Columbus sighted the island on his second voyage, in 1493, and named it after a beloved icon, the figure of Santa María de la Antigua in the Seville cathedral. He didn't "discover" it, of course: there had been people living on the island for thousands of years—Indians, including the Caribs, who were fated almost to disappear. It wasn't colonized by Europeans until 1632, when a party of English settlers from nearby St. Kitts landed and claimed Antigua for the Crown. There was already a flourishing English settlement on Barbados, 300 miles to the south, and it was thence, after the upheavals of the English Civil War and the Restoration, that Sir Christopher Codrington came in 1674 to establish a new plantation. The first crop grown was tobacco, which was supplanted by sugar. People were needed to cut and crush the cane, and this raw material was provided by the slave trade.



CHRIS HUXLEY/CARIBBEAN IMAGES

Saint Phillips Church, circa 1681

Almost all of the 64,000 Antiguan citizens today are of pure West African descent. Their forebears' labor didn't even produce something very useful, like the cotton grown on the plantations of the South: few crops today seem more politically and physiologically incorrect than tobacco and sugar. Those years in the island's story are maybe best passed over, though the "heritage industry" flourishes even here, restoring the surviving windmills—there is one at Betty's Hope—where the sugar was crushed.

What can't be passed over is the fascinating series of echoes which begins at this point between Antigua and England. Codrington had a son, also Christopher, who became a fellow of All Souls College at Oxford before returning to the West Indies as governor of the Leeward Islands, and who later retired to a life of study. From his Antiguan wealth he bequeathed money to his old college, and it paid for the Codrington Library, one of the finest buildings in Oxford, where I used to shelter once upon a time to get away from the noise and the people. England is sprinkled with these products of West Indian money from the eighteenth century—the Trump Towers of their age (an architecturally more distinguished one than ours). I wouldn't like to compute how many of the fine Georgian terraces and crescents of Bath were built with sugar money. Overlooking the city is Beckford's Tower, a strange edifice put up by William Beckford, the eccentric author of *Vathek* and the builder of an even more fantastical gothic folly at Fonthill, in Wiltshire.

By the time the tower was built, at the end of the eighteenth century, Antigua had become strategically as well as economically important to the British. English Harbour is one of the finest natural ports in the West Indies, and was a vital naval base in Nelson's time.

THE harbor is still crammed with sails, but now they belong to pleasure boats rather than ships of the line. This is a paradise for yachties. They come like a D-Day invading fleet during Antigua Sailing Week, at the end of April, but they come in numbers all year round. They come to refit. They come to explore the delights of English Harbour, whose center, on a spit of land between two bays, contains 200-year-old buildings lovingly restored for new purposes: to be hotels and bars instead of ships' chandlers.

And they come to eat well. One of the drawbacks of long voyages under sail, now as in Nelson's time, is a monotonous diet. As the yachts approach Antigua, the ship-to-shore radio waves crackle with restaurant reservations. Around English Harbour there are several surprisingly good, if not particularly cheap, places to eat what might be called international cuisine. We enjoyed Colombo's and La Perruche. And yet, toying with another rich dish, I couldn't help thinking that one no more goes to a tropical island for elaborate cooking and fine wine than one goes to the Grand Canyon for Baroque architecture. The real way to eat well in Antigua is to stick to fresh fish and vegetables.

To see the harbor best, drive up to Shirley Heights, a great headland where two centuries ago the British built barracks that still stand. One old military building is now an inn, and sitting there in the evening breeze with a glass of rum punch, you can look down and understand why the Royal Navy valued this shelter so much. You may also hear sporting overtones, at least if you are English. Down below is Mill Reef, which gave its name to the brilliant colt that won the Derby (*the* Derby, please, at Epsom) in 1971. He sired another fine horse that won the Derby in 1978—called Shirley Heights.

In English Harbour there are plenty of places to stay, but for peace and quiet we stayed on another corner of the island, at the Long Bay Hotel. It's comfortable but unfussy, Canadian-American owned, with a largely American clientele and an English manageress who wanted to know how her local rugby team was doing (I was able to break the bad news). On one side of the hotel is a beach and shallow sea, on the other a lagoon with a few small boats, which our balcony overlooked. And it was sitting there that I reread the pages where Antigua makes its first significant appearance in English literature.

Sir Thomas Bertram is the owner of the eponymous Mansfield Park in Jane Austen's novel. He also owns a plantation in Antigua, which he goes to visit. Edward W. Said, in his recent book *Culture and Imperialism*, makes much of this—too much, I suspect. No doubt it is interesting and significant that an English novelist writing in 1814 could casually refer to a slave economy. But Sir Thomas's plantations are surely what Hitchcock used to call a "McGuffin," a device to get the plot moving—in this case to get Sir Thomas out of the way. For that matter, it's worth remembering that when he does return to interrupt the improperly

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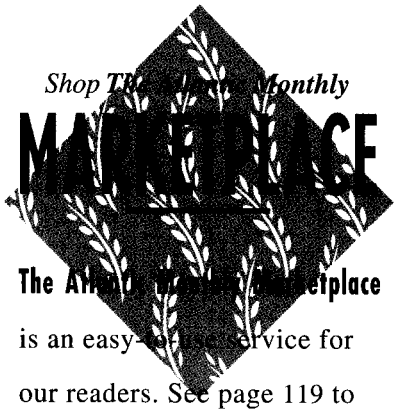

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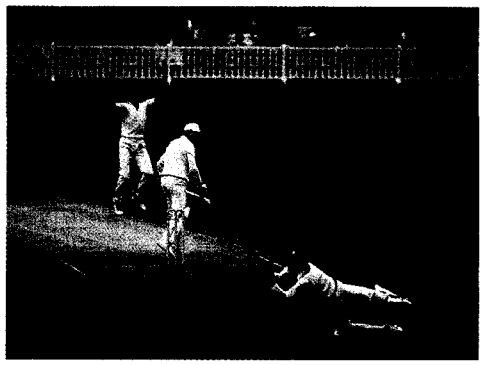
got-up amateur theatricals, the wonderfully dramatic line "My father is come! He is in the hall at this moment" ends the first of the three volumes in which the novel was originally published. No soap scriptwriter could have ended an episode more tantalizingly.

The climate of the island, and its appearance, change along its length of less than twenty miles. Driving across, I wondered where Sir Thomas's estate might have been. Was it the windy northeast, or the sultry southwest, where banana palms grow among dense foliage? Near St. John's, or English Harbour? And what happened to the workers on the Bertram plantation? We don't know—but we know what happened to the Antiguans as a whole, and it is rather touching. They became Englishmen. Perhaps some politically conscious Antiguans might resent this description, but it is not meant as a putdown.

To understand what I mean, drive through any village and see the little boys on the sparse ground playing with bat and ball: flat bat and red ball. At this point I hesitate. Without false modesty, I know certain journalistic tasks to be beyond me: to write "Canada, land of the future," let's say, or to write an amusing piece on qualified majority voting in the European Union—or to explain the joys of cricket to an American audience. All I will say is that cricket is the ruling passion of Antigua. For the Antiguans, cricket is the road to greatness. As I saw for myself in the national stadium, at St. John's, the Leeward Islands (which in a cricket context effectively means Antigua), with their tiny population, can give the English team a serious game. And although the names of those Antiguan heroes Viv Richards, Andy Roberts, and Richie Richardson may not mean much in Boston or New York, these men are truly world famous, from the West Indies to England, from Pakistan to Australia.

The game was introduced to the island last century. In 1895 a touring side went out from England and made some interesting discoveries. The game was watched by huge crowds, up to 7,000 people, or what must have been a fifth of the population at the time. A member of the touring team innocently recorded that the Antiguans "consider themselves as good as, if not better than, the whites." He continued, "In Antigua they also get severely offended if they are addressed as 'Niggers.' Blacks is the name they like to be called." And one of the Antiguan cricketers, acknowledging that some of his fellows were rather small and puny, astutely said, according to the English diarist, that "if they had the same food as we, they would readily have beaten us." They got their more nutritious food, and no English cricket fan needs to be told what happened: they readily beat us.

Despite its embarrassing or ludicrous



ADRIAN MURRELL/TONY STONE WORLDWIDE

England versus the West Indies

frissons, that first quoted passage is touching. It explains why Antiguans are what they are, neither resentful nor servile. One would like to think those were English characteristics. Antiguans are in some ways more English than the English. We like to pretend that we are a nation of cricket-lovers. But any visitor to London in summer can disprove this by looking in at Lord's to find a First Class (major-league) county match being played in front of a smattering of spectators. The truth is that, as George Orwell said fifty years ago, cricket isn't really very popular in England.

The English also like to think that they are a churchgoing people, when the truth is that services of the Church of England are now attended regularly by about one English person in thirty. Certainly you will never see in Somerset—or in London, or in any city or village in any other part of my country—what I saw on Sunday morning in St. Philip's Parish, near Long Bay: an Anglican church with literally standing room only, so full that worshipers were squeezed out the door.

And so if you want to see what England was like once—what is still an England of the imagination—go to Antigua. It has that quality, and what the Old Country never offered: swimming and sailing and sitting in the sun in February.

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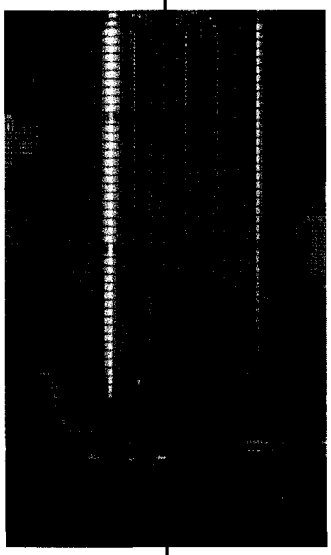

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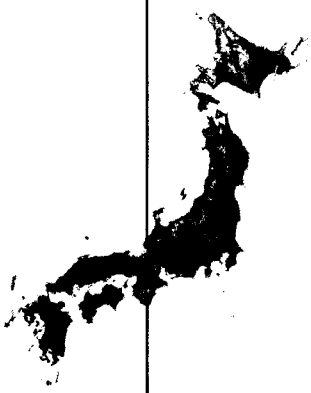

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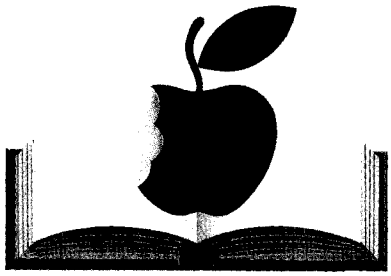
The Failure of Sex Education

by BARBARA DAFOE WHITEHEAD



"Comprehensive sex education," mandated in seventeen states, is the educational fad of the hour, yet there is little evidence that it "works"—prevents teenage pregnancy and stanches the spread of sexually transmitted disease. Defended by its professional-class originators as "getting real" about teenage sex, it fails to speak to the grim reality of what the author calls "the new sexual revolution" among the young

AMID rising concern about the hazards of teenage sex, health and school leaders are calling for an expanded effort to teach sex education in the schools. At the moment the favored approach is called comprehensive sex education. The nation's highest-ranking health officer, Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders, has endorsed this approach as the chief way to reduce unwed childbearing and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) among teenagers. The pillars of the health and school establishments, including the National Association of School Psychologists, the American Medical Association, the National School Boards Association, and the Society for Adolescent Medicine, support this approach. So do a growing number of state legislatures. Over the past decade seventeen states have adopted mandates to teach comprehensive sex education, and thirty more support it.

Sex education in the schools is not new, of course, but never before has it attempted to expose children to so much so soon. Comprehensive sex education includes much more than a movie about menstruation and a class or two in human reproduction. It begins in kindergarten and continues into high school. It sweeps across disciplines, taking up the biology of reproduction, the psychology of relationships, the sociology of the family, and the sexology of masturbation and massage. It seeks not simply to reduce health risks to teenagers but also to build self-esteem, prevent sexual abuse, promote respect for all kinds of families, and make little boys more nurturant and little girls more assertive. As Dr. Elders explains, comprehensive sex education is not just about giving children a "plumbing lesson."

This approach is appealing for several reasons. First, it reaches the vast majority of American schoolchildren, through the public school system. Second, it is inexpensive. Principals have to do little more than buy a sex-education

Illustrations by José Cruz

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curriculum and enroll the coach or home-economics teacher in a training workshop, and their school has a sex-education program. Third, to panicky parents, worried about their ability to protect their children from AIDS and other STDs, comprehensive sex education offers a reassuring message: The schools will teach your children how to protect themselves.

Nonetheless, comprehensive sex education has provoked vigorous opposition, both at the grass roots and especially in the organized ranks of the religious right. Its critics argue that when it comes to teaching children about sex, the public schools should convey one message only: abstinence. In response, sex educators point to the statistics. Face facts, they say. A growing number of teenagers are engaging in sex and suffering its harmful consequences. It is foolish, if not irresponsible, to deny that reality. If more teenagers are sexually active, why deprive them of the information they need to avoid early pregnancy and disease? What's more, why insist on a standard of conduct for teenagers that adults themselves no longer honor or obey? As usual, the Surgeon General states the basic proposition memorably: "Everybody in the world is opposed to sex outside of marriage, and yet everybody does it. I'm saying, 'Get real.'"

This rhetoric is politically shrewd. It is smart to identify sex education with realism, honesty, and sexual freedom. (Its opponents are thereby unrealistic, hypocritical, and sexually unliberated.) Similarly, it is advantageous to link the sex-education campaign with the struggle against religious fundamentalism and, more generally, with opposition to religious argument in public life. When the issue is cast in Scopestrial terms, it appears that an approach to sex education based in science will triumph over one rooted in blind faith.

But the sex educators' rhetoric is double-edged. As credentialed professionals, trained in the health and pedagogical sciences, advocates for a "reality-based" approach must at some point submit to reality tests. Their claims raise the inevitable question, How realistic is their approach to solving the problems associated with teenage sex? Or, to be more specific, What is the evidence that comprehensive sex education can achieve its stated goals? Does comprehensive sex education respond to the real-life circumstances of teenagers today? Does the new sex pedagogy take into account the realities of teenage sex in the 1990s?

The New Jersey Model

A FEW months ago I set out to answer these questions by venturing into a state with a long and strong commitment to comprehensive sex education. Few states have worked harder or longer than New Jersey to bring sexual enlightenment to schoolchildren. In 1980 the state adopted one of the nation's first mandates for comprehensive sex education—or family-life education, as it is called there—and it was the very first state to require sex education for children in the primary grades. Its pioneering efforts have earned New Jersey the equivalent of a five-star rating from the Sex Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS), a national advocacy organization that promotes comprehensive sex education.

Virtually every public school student in New Jersey receives sex education (the average is twenty-four hours a year), and some schoolchildren, like those in the Irvington public schools, have an early and full immersion. Overall, teachers are trained and experienced, averaging close to ten years of teaching a family-life curriculum.

According to recent opinion polls, public support for sex education in New Jersey is strong. In one survey an overwhelming majority of adults said they favored teaching teenagers about sex in school, including controversial topics such as contraception, homosexuality, and "safer sex." Slightly more Catholics than Protestants surveyed favor sex education (88 percent to 84 percent), and support is nearly as high among parents as among nonparents. Parents tend to be more knowledgeable about the content of sex-education programs, and a majority say their school's offerings are excellent or good. Another survey, conducted by Rutgers University's Eagleton Institute, found that 61 percent of parents with school-age children say they would permit their child to get condoms from the schools.

Politically, therefore, sex education has been an all-but-unqualified success in New Jersey. Since 1980 popular support has steadily increased, and over that period the state mandate has held up against repeated legislative challenges, including a recent proposal to stress sexual abstinence.

The key to this success is a well-organized advocacy effort. A state mandate alone rarely achieves the goal of comprehensive sex education, because local school authorities often fail to act vigorously to observe the mandate. It takes a strong and sustained campaign to win over parents and teachers, beat back political opponents, and stiffen the spines of timid school administrators. In New Jersey two closely allied organizations advance the sex-education cause. Rutgers, the state university, administers grants and provides office space to the advocacy campaign. It is, though, the small but ubiquitous New Jersey Network for Family Life Education that conducts the daily business of winning support for sex education across the state.

The Philosophy of Sex Education

SUSAN Wilson runs the Network from her handsome gated home in Princeton. (The Network is officially headquartered at Rutgers.) Wilson, who has been an indefatigable crusader for comprehensive sex education for more than a decade, helped to write and pass the state mandate in the late 1970s, while she was a member of the State Board of Education. A few years later she took over as the head of the Network. With a budget of about $200,000 this

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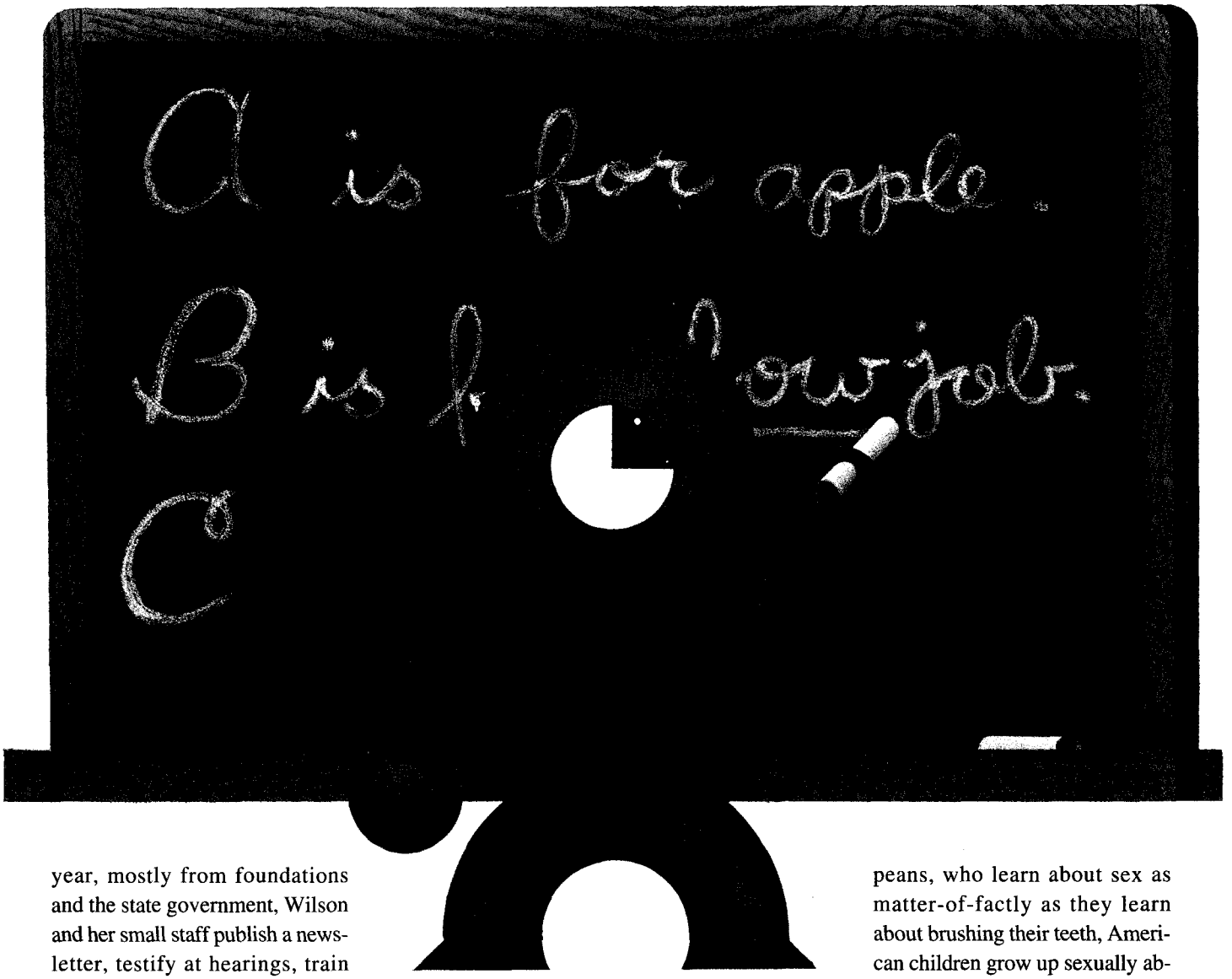

year, mostly from foundations and the state government, Wilson and her small staff publish a newsletter, testify at hearings, train teachers, develop sex-education materials, fight efforts to overturn the mandate, and perform the scores of other duties required in their advocacy work. But Wilson's single most important task, which she clearly enjoys, is traveling up and down the state making the case for comprehensive sex education.

Because the case that she makes represents today's comprehensive-sex-education orthodoxy, it deserves close attention. It has several tenets. First, children are "sexual from birth." Like many sex educators, Wilson rejects the classic notion that a latency period occurs between the ages of about six and twelve, when children are sexually quiescent. "Ever since I've gotten into this field, the opponents have used that argument to frighten policymakers," she says. "But there is a body of developmental knowledge that says this is not true." And, according to Wilson, it is not simply that children are born sexual or that their sexuality is constantly unfolding. It is also that sexuality is much broader than most imagine: "You are not just being sexual by having intercourse. You are being sexual when you throw your arms around your grandpa and give him a hug."

Second, children are sexually miseducated. Unlike Europeans, who learn about sex as matter-of-factly as they learn about brushing their teeth, American children grow up sexually absurd—caught between opposing but equally distorted views of sex. One kind of distortion comes from parents. Instead of affirming the child's sexuality, parents convey the message that sex is harmful, shameful, or sinful. Or, out of a misguided protectiveness, they cling to the notion of childhood innocence and fail to provide timely or accurate information about sex. The second kind of distortion comes from those who would make sex into a commodity. While parents withhold information, the media and the marketplace spew sexual misinformation. It is this peculiar American combination of repressiveness and permissiveness that leads to sexual wrong thinking and poor sexual decision-making, and thus to high rates of teenage pregnancy and STDs.

Third, if miseducation is the problem, then sex education is the solution. Since parents are failing miserably at the task, it is time to turn the job over to the schools. Schools occupy a safe middle ground between Mom and MTV. They are places where "trusted adults" can teach children how to protect themselves against the hazards of sex and sexual abuse.

Moreover, unlike homes, schools do not burden children with moral strictures. As Wilson explains, schools can re-

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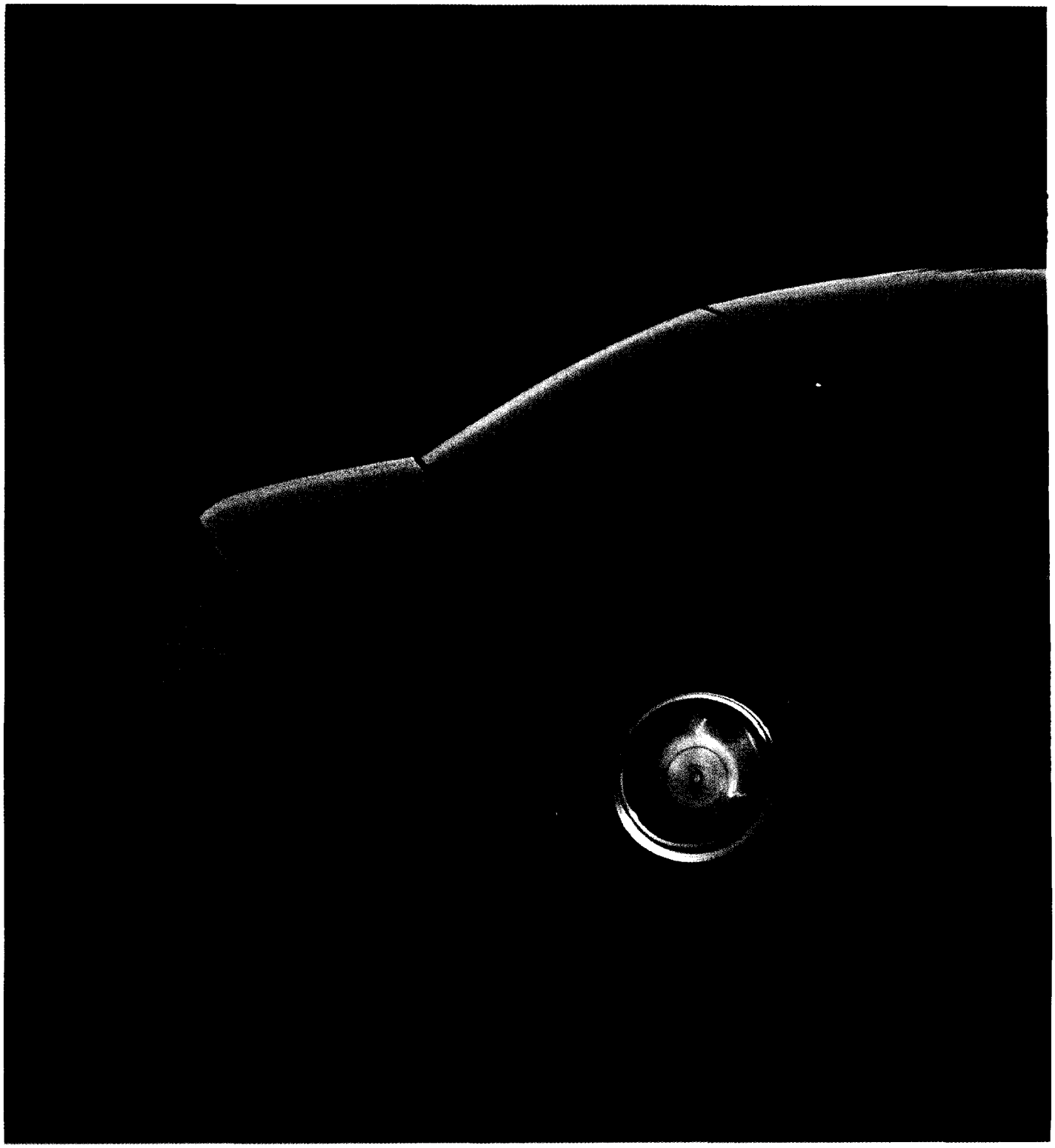

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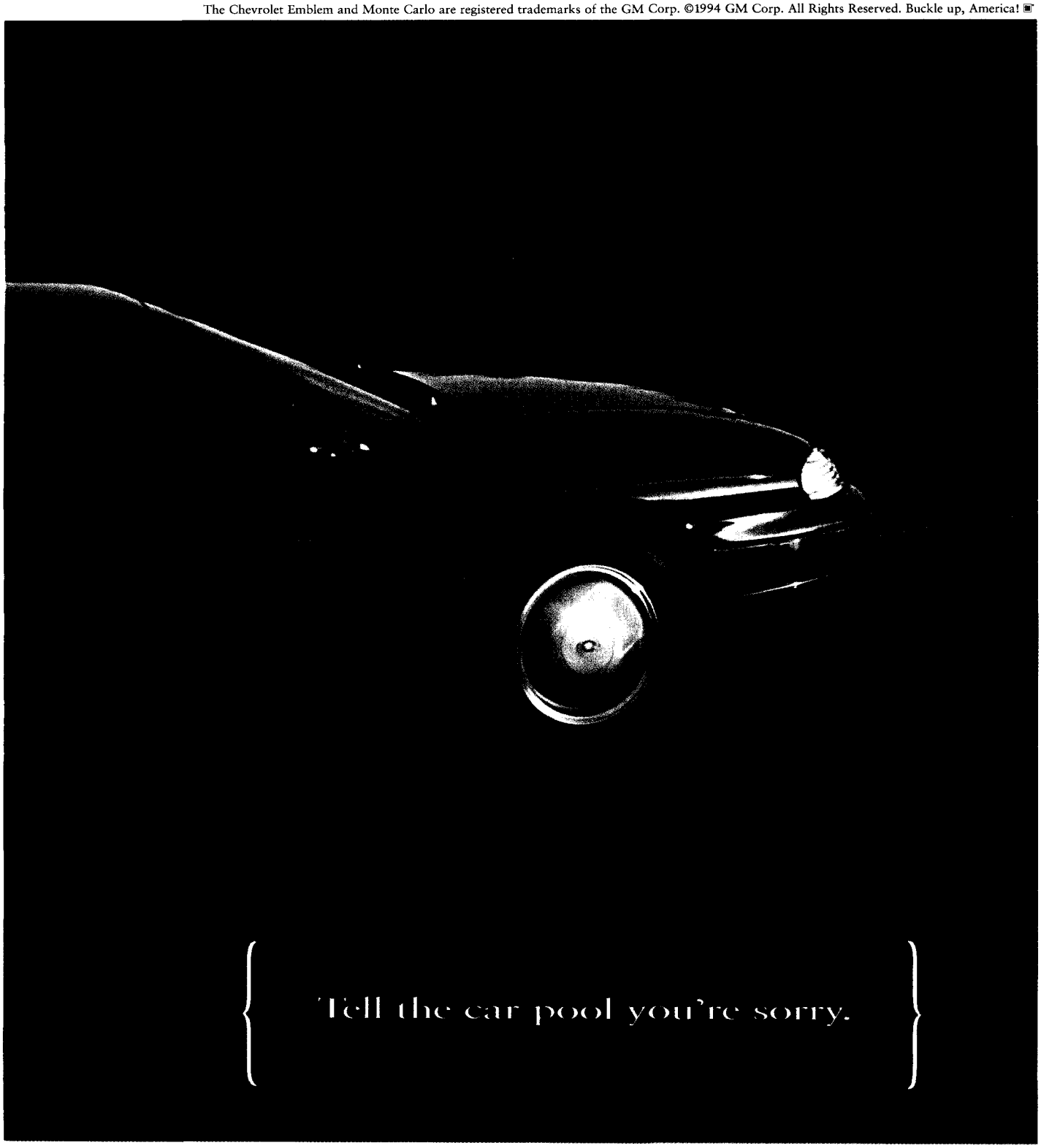

ceptible shifts of an electronically controlled, 4-speed automatic quickly replace the din of idle conversation. Where what was once a long half-hour commute suddenly seems to be almost too fleeting. Still, maybe you should think about giving someone else a turn... then again, maybe not.

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solve the "conflict between morality and reality" by offering unbiased statements of fact. Here, for example, is how a teacher might handle the subject of masturbation in a factually accurate way: "Some people think it is okay to masturbate and some people think it is not okay to masturbate, but most people think that no harm comes to you if you masturbate." Consequently, when it comes to sex, schools rather than homes offer a haven in the heartless world.

A fourth and defining tenet is that sex education must begin in the earliest grades. Like math or reading, comprehensive sex education takes a "building blocks" approach that moves from basic facts to more sophisticated concepts, from simple skills to more complex competencies. Just as it would be unthinkable to withhold math education until the sixth grade, so, too, is it unwise to delay the introduction of sex education until the eighth grade.

In the beginning, before there is sex, there is sex literacy. Just as boys and girls learn their number facts in the first grade, they acquire the basic sex vocabulary, starting with the proper names for genitalia and progressing toward an understanding of masturbation, intercourse, and contraception. As they gain fluency and ease in talking about sexual matters, students become more comfortable with their own sexuality and more skillful in communicating their feelings and desires. Boys and girls can chat with one another about sex, and children can confide in adults without embarrassment.

Early sex education readies grade school children for the onslaught of puberty. By the time they reach adolescence, they are cognitively as well as biologically primed for sex. Moreover, with early sex training, teenagers are much more likely to engage in what Wilson and her colleagues consider responsible sexual conduct: abstinence, noncoital sex, or coitus with a condom. Since abstinence will not lead to pregnancy or STDs, and noncoital and protected sex are not likely to do so, comprehensive sex education will help to reduce the incidence of these problems among teenagers.

This is the philosophy of comprehensive sex education. But how to translate it into lessons for little children? Although the state mandate allowed school districts to shop around for a suitable curriculum, at first not much was available for primary schoolers. Most teachers had to improvise a curriculum or adapt higher-grade-level texts to the early grades. What was missing was a standard text: a Dick and Jane reader for the Michaels and Ashleys of the post-sexual-revolution generation.

Family Life

RUTGERS University Press seized the opportunity. With a growing number of states adopting comprehensive-sex-education mandates, and with the 595 school districts of New Jersey seeking to meet their state mandate, the market for a sex primer looked promising. The press set out to fill that market niche. It assembled a small, sympathetic advisory panel, including Susan Wilson, and then hired Barbara Sprung, an independent consultant from New York City, to write its pathbreaking sex-education text.

A graduate of Sarah Lawrence and the Bank Street College of Education, Barbara Sprung spent eight years as an elementary school teacher before she embarked on a second career as a diversity-education specialist. During the 1970s and the 1980s, working first for a feminist organization and then for her own organization, Educational Equity Concepts, Sprung produced books, teachers' guides, and other materials based on a "nonsexist, multicultural, disability-sensitive, early childhood approach." The Rutgers project was her first venture into sex education.

With her advisers, she came up with *Learning About Family Life*, a "textbook package" described in the Rutgers University Press marketing brochure as a "pioneering" approach to family-life education for schoolchildren in kindergarten through third grade. The textbook also carries a pioneering price tag—$250 a package. As befits a fundamental text, the curriculum sets forth its guiding principles: "Sexuality is a part of daily living, as essential to normal functioning as mathematics and reading." And as befits a primer, it offers the sex basics. Here is a representative sampling:

On female genitalia: "The vulva is the area enclosing three parts: a vagina, the opening you urinate from, and a clitoris. . . . Clitoris is a small sensitive part that only girls have, and it sometimes makes you feel good."

On sexual intercourse: "To have sex, the man and woman lie very close to each other so that their bodies are touching. Usually it happens in bed, and they don't have any clothes on. Together the woman and man place the man's penis inside the woman's vagina, and while they are loving each other, many sperm come from the testicles into the man's penis. After a while, the sperm come through the little hole at the end of the man's penis, and they swim up the vagina and meet the egg in the fallopian tube."

On masturbation: "Grown-ups sometimes forget to tell children that touching can also give people pleasure, especially when someone you love touches you. And you can give yourself pleasure, too, and that's okay. When you touch your own genitals, it's called masturbating."

On sex: "When you are older, you can decide if you want to have sex. Most people do, because they like it and it's a very important way of showing that we love someone."

These sex facts are presented in a particularly captivating form. Unlike standard sex-education curricula, which are about as exciting to read as an IRS Form 1040, *Learning About Family Life* tells a story. The text follows a fictional class of primary school children and their teachers, Ms. Ruiz and Mr. Martin, as they experience a series of family events during the course of the school year. The teachers and children are characters in a continuing saga, full of drama and incident. Primary school teachers tell Sprung that children eagerly ask, "When are we going to talk about those kids in

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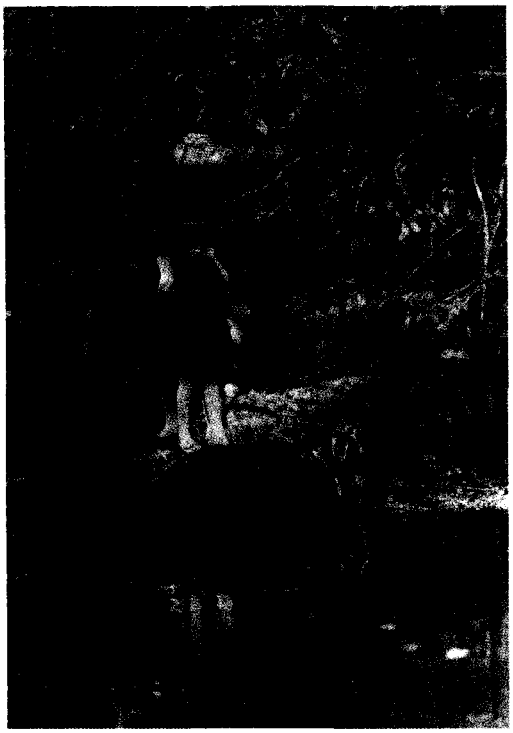

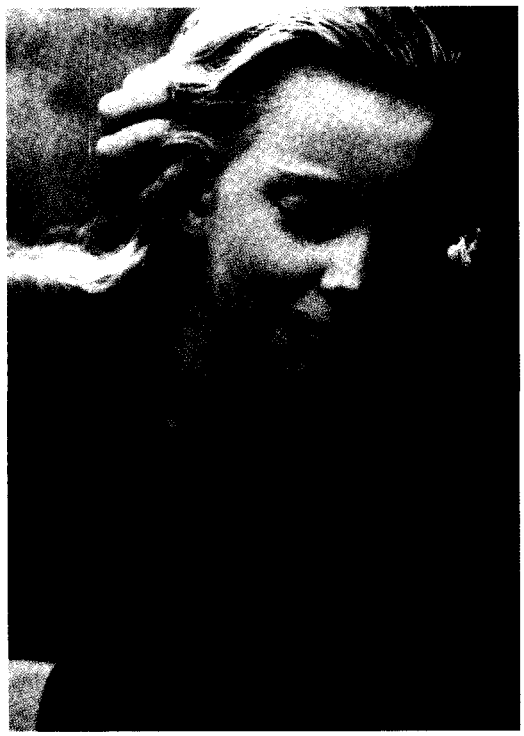

The story has changed somewhat

over the years as older generations of the family tell it to newer ones. But somehow no one ever gets too tired to tell it, or too bored to listen. In the end, it isn't so much that we're in the story; but that the story is in us.

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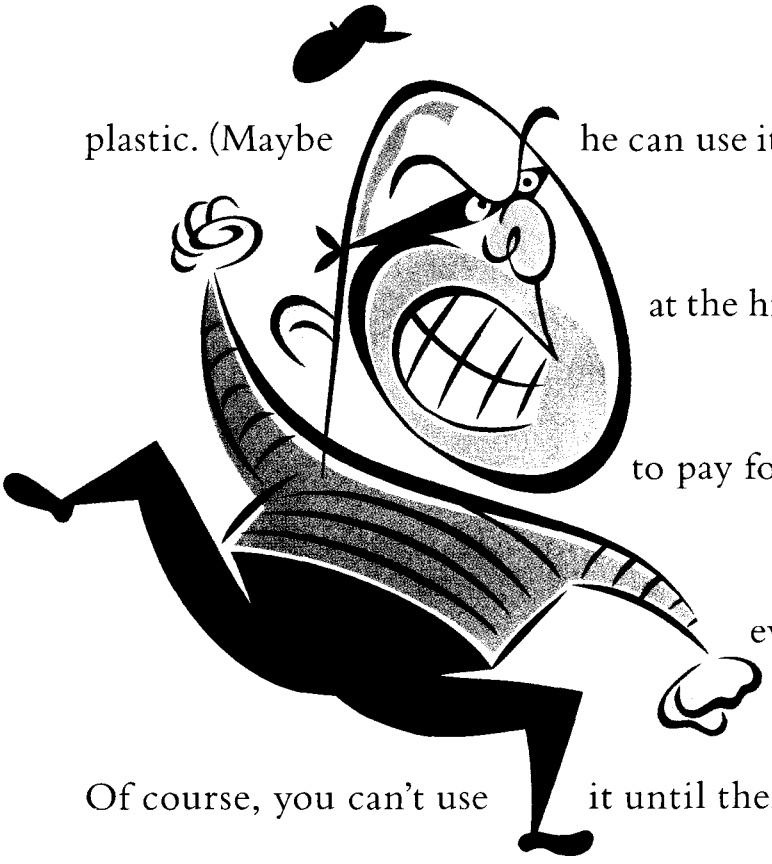

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Class 203 again?" Little wonder. This is sex education packaged as *Sesame Street*.

Like *Sesame Street*, *Learning About Family Life* deals with the social and family issues of the day. During the year Classroom 203 encounters the following events: Ms. Ruiz's pregnancy and childbirth, the death of Mr. Martin's father, the drug arrest of Martine's cousin, the birth of a child to Joseph's teenage sister, the arrival of Natan's grandmother from Russia, Sarah's trip to see her divorced father, and the visit of Seth's HIV-infected uncle. These events and others, presented in forty-three vignettes, provide an occasion for straight talk about genitalia, sexual intercourse, pregnancy and childbirth, HIV and AIDS, masturbation, sexual abuse, physical disability, drug abuse, death, divorce, grandparents, and all kinds of families.

As they read about Classroom 203, children acquire a scientific sex vocabulary. "Adults in the children's families probably don't use accurate terms like anus and buttocks," the teachers' resource guide warns. "You, as the teacher, are the best role model for creating comfort." Indeed, the teacher is to insist on replacing even words that are perfectly apt for a six-year-old's vocabulary with more-scientific terms. In a lesson on pregnancy, Brian talks about how his mother's tummy felt when the baby was growing inside. Ms. Ruiz says, "I know we are used to saying *baby* and *tummy*. But *fetus* and *uterus* are more accurate words." And when it comes to a hot issue like masturbation, a teacher's cool command of the facts is crucial: "Masturbation is a topic that is viewed negatively in many families, based on long-standing cultural and religious teachings. Assure parents that your approach will be low keyed and will stress privacy, but also make it clear that you will not perpetuate myths that can mar children's healthy sexual development." Teachers must also debunk the myth that masturbation is only for boys. Girls must be granted equal time to ask masturbation questions.

If girls need nudging in the sex department, boys need coaxing in the emotions department. Indeed, one of the strongest themes in the text is the problematic nature of boys. Boys are emotionally clogged, unable to cry or to express feelings. And little boys may enter grade school with the idea that such sex-related matters as pregnancy, childbearing, and baby care are only for girls. Therefore *Learning About Family Life* enlists boys in nurturing and "feelings" activities. These may be difficult for boys who come from macho backgrounds. But here again the school provides a cultural haven. If the lessons in nurturing conflict with a boy's family or cultural teachings, the teachers' manual advises, the teacher should say, "In school, talking about feelings is a part of learning."

In early sex education feelings talk and sex talk are closely related for good reason: little schoolchildren do not have the capacity to understand big adult issues directly. But many are now exposed to big adult issues at an early age, and so it is necessary to find routes to understanding. Early sex education thus turns to affective pathways and to a therapeutic pedagogy.

There is something radically new about comprehensive sex education. As a philosophy and a pedagogy, it is rooted in a technocratic understanding of teenage sexuality. It envisions a regime of teenage sexual self-rule.

Stuff Happens

According to its publishers, *Learning About Family Life* provides a realistic slice of contemporary family life. Nonetheless, it is a highly selective slice. There is a vignette designed to expose children to an "amicable divorce." But there is no corresponding vignette to give children a picture of an amicable, much less a long-lasting, marriage. (Susan Wilson believes that you "can't beat kids all over the head" with marriage.) There is a story about sex as a way to show love, but no story about commitment as a way to show love. There is an effort to give children positive messages about expressing sexuality, but no effort to give children positive messages about the advantages of not expressing sexuality before they are grown. And this family world is only thinly populated by men. Ms. Ruiz is a well-defined character in the story; the male teacher, Mr. Martin, is more of a bit player, taking center stage in one story to talk about masturbation and in another to cry. There are grandmothers but no grandfathers. A brand-new father makes a cameo appearance to show off his nurturing skills, but the only other father is divorced and a plane ride away.

Here is the dilemma: *Learning About Family Life* is caught between two competing tendencies. On the one hand, it works hard to reflect the real-life family circumstances of many children. It deals with some hard-edged issues: sexual abuse, unwed teenage motherhood, drug dealing, and divorce. On the other hand, it takes a deeply sentimental view of these gritty realities. Consider, for example, the story "Joseph Is an Uncle":

Joseph's seventeen-year-old sister has a new baby. She is

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not married. The baby's father is gone. Joseph's parents are mad and sad at the same time. His sister is tired and out of sorts. Yet things work out. The family rallies round. An aunt takes care of the baby during the day. Joseph's sister returns to school. Joseph shows the photograph of his new nephew to his best friend, but he doesn't want anyone else to know about his sister's baby. His friend encourages him to show the photo to Mr. Martin and Ms. Ruiz.

Of all the sex tales, Joseph's story merits the closest attention. Early sex education, after all, purports to help children avoid the fate of Joseph's teenage sister. So what are we to make of this story? First, though illegitimacy is not treated cavalierly, it is depicted as a family crisis that is quickly resolved, because all the folks pitch in. Apparently there are no longer-term consequences for Joseph's sister or his little nephew—such as poverty, welfare dependency, or diminished school and job prospects. Second, in a curriculum designed to teach personal responsibility, the text misses an opportunity to do so. Unwed teenage parenthood is not an affliction visited on people like hurricanes or drought, yet that is the message of the story. Among the families in Classroom 203 stuff happens.

Finally, think about the baby's father. Joseph's sister's boyfriend has sex as an expression of love, exactly as the sex primer describes, but then he takes off. Though *Learning About Family Life* has stern messages for boys about caring and sharing, it ducks the basic question of male responsibility. A seven-year-old boy listening to this story might well conclude that illegitimacy is a girls' topic.

As it turns out, then, early sex education is not straight talk at all but a series of object lessons. And these are offered not so much with a nose for the facts as with an eye to the sex educators' philosophy. *Learning About Family Life* is no less didactic in its views on family life than Dick and Jane. To be sure, a truly fact-based approach would have to deal with some hard truths. For example, it would have to say that unwed teenage parenthood carries grave consequences for teenagers and their babies; that not all families are equally capable of caring for children; and that absent long-term commitment, responsibility, and sacrifice, love does not conquer all. Since some children grow up in broken or unwed teenage families, there is an understandable concern that children not feel stigmatized by such facts. Yet such tender concern raises a tough question: If the classroom is the source of unbiased factual information, how can the problems of illegitimacy and broken families be dealt with without touching on the key facts in the matter?

The Pedagogy of Sex Education

In the middle grades sex education takes a more technical turn. At eleven and twelve many young people are approaching the threshold of puberty while others are already in full pubertal flower. (Today the average age of menarche is twelve and a half.) Now, as hormones kick in, children are ready to express themselves sexually. Thus the focus of sex education shifts from sex literacy to building sexual skills. This is when students must acquire the knowledge and technical skills to manage their emerging sexuality.

Sex-education advocates agree that abstaining from sex is the best way to avoid STDs and early pregnancy. But they reject an approach that is limited to teaching abstinence. First, they say, abstinence-based teaching ignores the growing number of adolescents who are already sexually active at age twelve or thirteen. One Trenton schoolteacher said to me, "How can I teach abstinence when there are three pregnant girls sitting in my eighth-grade class?" Second, abstinence overlooks the fact that, as Susan Wilson explains, "it is developmentally appropriate for teenagers to learn to give and receive pleasure."

Consequently, the New Jersey sex-education advocates call for teaching middle-schoolers about condoms, abortion, and the advantages of "protected" sex. But given the risks to teenagers, they are not crazy about sexual intercourse either. Indeed, Wilson says, Americans are fixated on "this narrow little thing called intercourse." The alternative is a broad thing called noncoital sex or, in the argot of advocates, "sexual expression without risk."

Noncoital sex includes a range of behaviors, from deep kissing to masturbation to mutual masturbation to full body massage. Since none of these involves intercourse, sex educators see them as ways for teenagers to explore their sexuality without harm or penalty. And from a broader public-health perspective, risk-free sexual expression has great potential. According to the Rutgers education professor William Firestone, who conducted a study of sex-education teaching in New Jersey for the Network for Family Life Education, noncoital sex offers "real opportunities to reduce dangers to many teens who engage in sexual behavior, despite recommendations for abstinence." Yet as Firestone's survey research shows, many teachers shrink from this approach. Wilson says, "We hardly ever talk to teens about necking and petting and admiring your body and maybe massage."

As Wilson points out, noncoital sex is most practicable when teenagers can communicate with each other. "A lot of people think that once you start down the road to sex, you can't stop, and that's the problem. But I think that by talking about these things and by role playing, you give kids control and you give them the language to say 'That's enough—I don't want any more. I don't want to have intercourse.'"

Since safe petting and good talking go together, middle school students need to continue to practice their communication skills. But in teaching these skills teachers cannot rely on old-fashioned didactic methods. Middle school students are still short-term thinkers, reckless in deed. Therefore sex education in middle school does not yet enter the realm of thinking and ideas but remains lodged instead in the realm of what one teacher calls "feelings and values."

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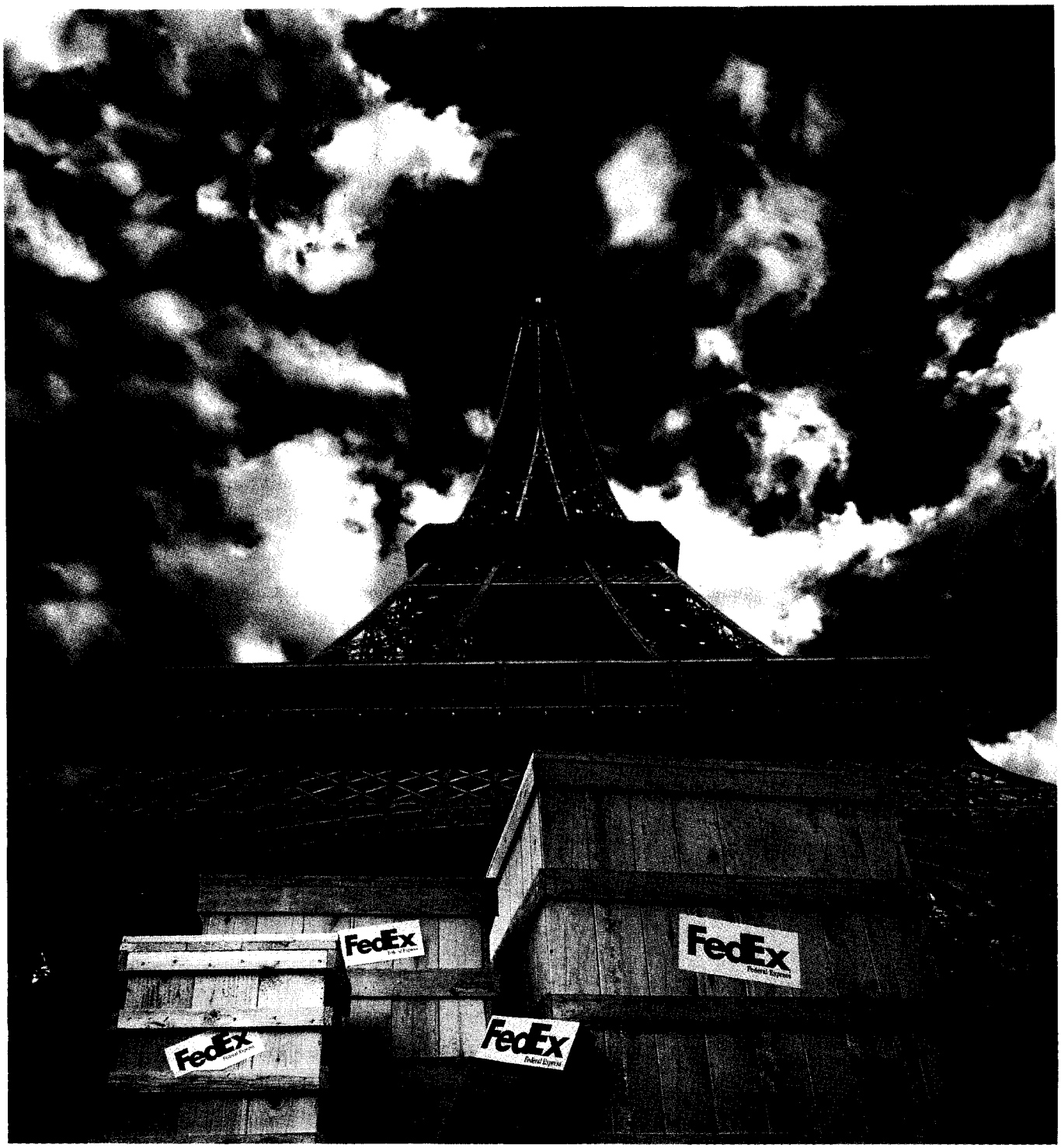

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"Hello, Vulva"

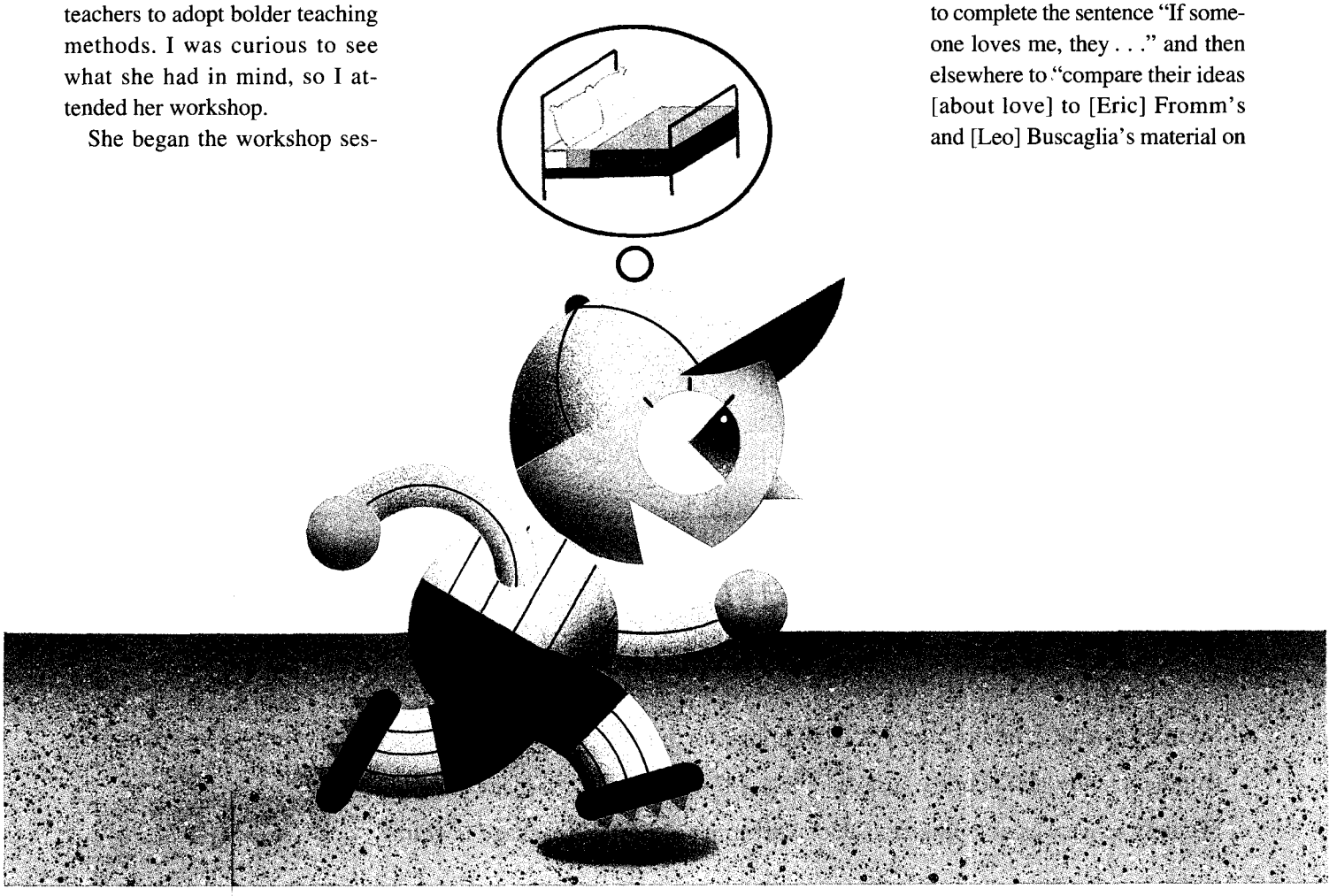
I ATTENDED a teacher-training conference sponsored by the Network for Family Life Education to get acquainted with the way sex is taught. In New Jersey, as in other states with mandates for comprehensive sex education, such one-day workshops are a mainstay of teacher training. For a small investment of time and money—a day out of the classroom and $35—teachers learn the latest in sex-education theory and practice. On the day I attended, the crowd was made up of physical-education, home-economics, and health teachers with a scattering of elementary school nurses as well. Almost all were women.

Deborah Roffman, an independent sex-education consultant from Maryland who teaches in several private middle and high schools, was the keynote speaker. (Like Roffman, most of the trainers at this conference came to it from the world of advocates, family planners, and private consultants. Only one teaches in the public schools.) She was an engaging speaker with the timing and phrasing of a good comedian. (*Teacher in audience:* "What do you say when a student asks you to define 'blow job'?" *Roffman:* "You say it is oral sex." Pause. *Roffman again:* "But what if the student's next question is 'Does that mean you talk while you screw?'") To kick off the conference, Roffman gave a rousing talk, urging teachers to adopt bolder teaching methods. I was curious to see what she had in mind, so I attended her workshop.

She began the workshop session with these instructions: "Turn to the person next to you. Make eye contact. Say 'Hello, penis.' Shake hands and return the greeting: 'Hello, vulva.'" This warmup exercise underscores a central idea in sex pedagogy: for teachers no less than for students, talking about sex provokes anxiety and embarrassment. Such embarrassment stands in the way of good communication, and good communication is crucial to responsible sexual conduct.

So is emotional literacy. To become more emotionally articulate, middle-schoolers engage in a series of feelings exercises. The purpose is to help students "normalize" and share common growing-up experiences. Roffman handed out a list of sample questions: "What is the worst thing your parents could find out about a child of theirs who is your age?" "Have you ever experienced the death of someone close to you?" "What is a way in which your parents are 'overprotective'?" In the middle schools as in the elementary schools, there is a continuing effort to break down boys' emotional reserve. Encourage your students to sit boy-girl, Roffman suggests, and ask the biggest boy in the class the first feelings question.

The Consortium for Educational Equity, at Rutgers, offers a similar set of feelings-and-values exercises in a sex curriculum designed for seventh- and eighth-graders. Some are sentence-completion exercises. In one, seventh-graders are asked to complete the sentence "If someone loves me, they . . ." and then elsewhere to "compare their ideas [about love] to [Eric] Fromm's and [Leo] Buscaglia's material on



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love." In another, students are to "write a positive self-statement . . .—'I am strong' . . . 'I am happy' . . ."—and then discuss the "impact of positive self-statements on feelings of self-esteem."

Other exercises draw on more therapeutic methods, such as role-playing and small-group work. There are gender-reversal exercises, in which girls and boys each play the role of the opposite sex. In small groups students may brainstorm about ways to deal with an unwanted pregnancy or come up with a list of their expectations of nonmarital sex.

Some of the gender-reversal exercises sound like birthday-party games. In one exercise, called the Fish-Bowl, girls are seated in a circle in which there is one empty chair. Boys form a circle around the girls. Girls talk about what they like and dislike about boys. If one of the boys wishes to speak, he sits in the empty chair in the girls' circle. After a time the boys repeat the exercise, with the girls in the outer circle.

Because of its intimate subject matter, the feelings-and-values classroom institutes a new code of classroom conduct. There are confidentiality rules. Roffman's middle school students are told that nothing said in sex-education class goes out of the class without students' express permission. In discussions middle-schoolers must protect the privacy of individuals who are not class members; except for classmates', no names may be used. Another rule is that any student who does not want to answer a question may pass. In some classes students agree to use only "I" statements, rather than "you" statements, in order to express their thoughts more positively.

In therapeutically oriented classrooms, moreover, the teacher assumes the role of confidant and peer. Like students, teachers are encouraged to share personal experiences. An idea book for New Jersey teachers, published by the Network, tells the inspirational story of a high school teacher who talks to his class about his vasectomy and how he feels about it. Yet although they are advised to share experiences, teachers are not to impose their opinions, even when it comes to arguably the most important question: "What is the right time to begin having sex?" The teacher is encouraged to turn the question back to the students: "How would you begin to make that decision?"

Sex educators defend this approach with the language of empowerment. Students, they say, must acquire the knowledge and skills to answer these questions for themselves. After all, grown-ups aren't around to supervise teenagers every minute of the day. Teachers can't follow students home, and working parents can't check up on teenagers who are home alone. Why not invest teenagers with the power to make wise choices on their own?

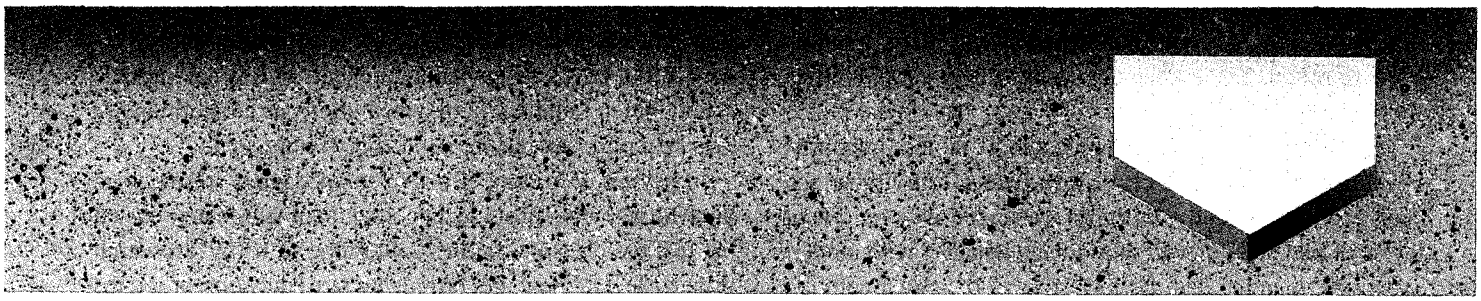
Reality Tests

ON its face, this new therapeutic sex pedagogy does not seem all that therapeutic or all that new. Teenage girls have enjoyed self-inventory tests at least as long as *Seventeen* magazine has been around. And there's nothing particularly revolutionary about small-group discussions of feelings and values. This, after all, is why teenagers invented the slumber party.

But on second glance there is something radically new about comprehensive sex education. As both a philosophy and a pedagogy, it is rooted in a deeply technocratic understanding of teenage sexuality. It assumes that once teenagers acquire a formal body of sex knowledge and skills, along with the proper contraceptive technology, they will be able to govern their own sexual behavior responsibly. In brief, what comprehensive sex education envisions is a regime of teenage sexual self-rule.

The sex educators offer their technocratic approach as an alternative to what they see as a failed effort to regulate teenage sexuality through social norms and religious values. Face facts. In a climate of sexual freedom the old standard of sexual conduct for teenagers—a standard separate from adult sexual standards—is breaking down. Increasingly teenagers are playing by the same sexual rules as adults. Therefore, why withhold from adolescents the information and technologies that are available to adults?

To be sure, sex educators have a point. Traditional sexual morality, along with the old codes of social conduct, is demonstrably less effective today than it once was in governing teenage sexual conduct. But although moral standards can exist even in the midst of a breakdown of morality, a technocratic view cannot be sustained if the techniques fiz-



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zle. Thus comprehensive sex education stands or falls on the proven effectiveness of its techniques.

For a variety of reasons the body of research on sex-education programs is not as rich and robust as we might wish. However, the available evidence suggests that we must be skeptical of the technocratic approach. First, comprehensive sex education places its faith in the power of knowledge to change behavior. Yet the evidence overwhelmingly suggests that sexual knowledge is only weakly related to teenage sexual behavior. The researcher Douglas Kirby, of ETR Associates, a nonprofit health-education firm in Santa Cruz, California, has been studying sex-education programs for more than a decade. During the 1980s he conducted a major study of the effectiveness of sex-education programs for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and he has since completed a review for the Centers for Disease Control of all published research on school-based sex-education programs designed to reduce the risks of unprotected sex. His research shows that students who take sex education do know more about such matters as menstruation, intercourse, contraception, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases than students who do not. (Thanks to federal funding for AIDS education in the schools, students tend to be very knowledgeable about the sources and prevention of HIV infection.)

But more accurate knowledge does not have a measurable impact on sexual behavior. As it is typically taught, sex education has little effect on teenagers' decisions to engage in or postpone sex. Nor, according to Kirby, do knowledge-based sex-education programs significantly reduce teenage pregnancy. And although teenagers who learn about contraception may be more likely to use it, their contraceptive practices tend to be irregular and therefore ultimately unreliable.

Comprehensive sex education assumes that knowledge acquired at earlier ages will influence behavior. Yet the empirical evidence suggests that younger teenagers, especially, are unlikely to act on what they know. An analysis of a Planned Parenthood survey concludes that a "knowledgeable thirteen-year-old is no more likely to use contraceptives than is an uninformed thirteen-year-old." As Kirby puts it, "Ignorance is not the solution, but knowledge is not enough."

If knowledge isn't enough, what about knowledge combined with communication skills? Sex education does appear to diminish teenagers' shyness about discussing sexual matters. One study shows that girls who have had sex education may be more likely to talk about sex with their parents than those who have not. Since talking with their mothers about sex may help some girls avoid pregnancy, this is a mildly positive effect. There does not seem to be a parallel effect for boys, however.

Overall, parent-child communication is far less important in influencing sexual behavior than parental discipline and supervision. One study, based on teenagers' own reports of levels of parental control, shows that teenagers with moderately strict parents had the lowest level of sexual activity, whereas teens with very strict parents had higher levels, and those with very permissive parents had the highest levels. Moreover, there is a strong empirical relationship between diminished parental supervision and early sexual activity.

In boy-girl communication, girls say that they want help in rejecting boys' sexual overtures. In a survey taken in the mid-1980s, 1,000 teenage girls aged sixteen and younger were asked to select from a list of more than twenty sex-related topics those areas where they would like more information and help. The girls were most likely to say they wanted more information on how to say no without hurting boys' feelings. This is especially noteworthy given that all the girls in the survey were sexually active, and some were mothers.

Beyond "no," better communication about sex does not seem to contribute to higher levels of sexual responsibility. To be sure, there has been little research into this aspect of teenage sexuality. But even absent research, there is good reason to be skeptical of the claim. If free and easy sex talk were a key determinant of sexual behavior, then we might expect the trends to look very different. It would be our tongue-tied grandparents who had high rates of illegitimacy and STDs, not today's franker and looser-lipped teenagers.

"You Are Not Ready for Sex"

UNSURPRISINGLY, there is not a shred of evidence to support the claim that noncoital sex, with or without communication, will reduce the likelihood of coitus. William Firestone, of Rutgers, who wrote the study for the Network for Family Life Education, concedes that his enthusiasm is empirically unfounded. In fact, several studies show just the opposite. Outercourse is a precursor of intercourse. But do we need studies to tell us this? Is it not graven in our memory that getting to third base vastly increases the chances of scoring a run? In fact, it could be argued that teaching noncoital sex techniques as a way of reducing the risks of coitus comes close to educational malpractice.

And what about empowering students to make their own sexual decisions? Douglas Kirby's work shows that teaching decision-making skills is not effective, either, in influencing teenage sexual behavior. Similarly, there is little empirical support for the claim made by comprehensive sex education's advocates that responsible sexual behavior depends on long years of sexual schooling. In fact, the evidence points in the opposite direction. Math and reading do require instruction over a period of time, but sex education may be most effective at a key developmental moment. This is not in grade school but in middle school, when pre-teens are hormonally gearing up for sex but are still mainly uninitiated.

In pursuit of a more effective sex pedagogy, researchers have turned away from technocratic approaches and dusted off that old chestnut, norms. According to Kirby's research review, several new and promising sex-education programs

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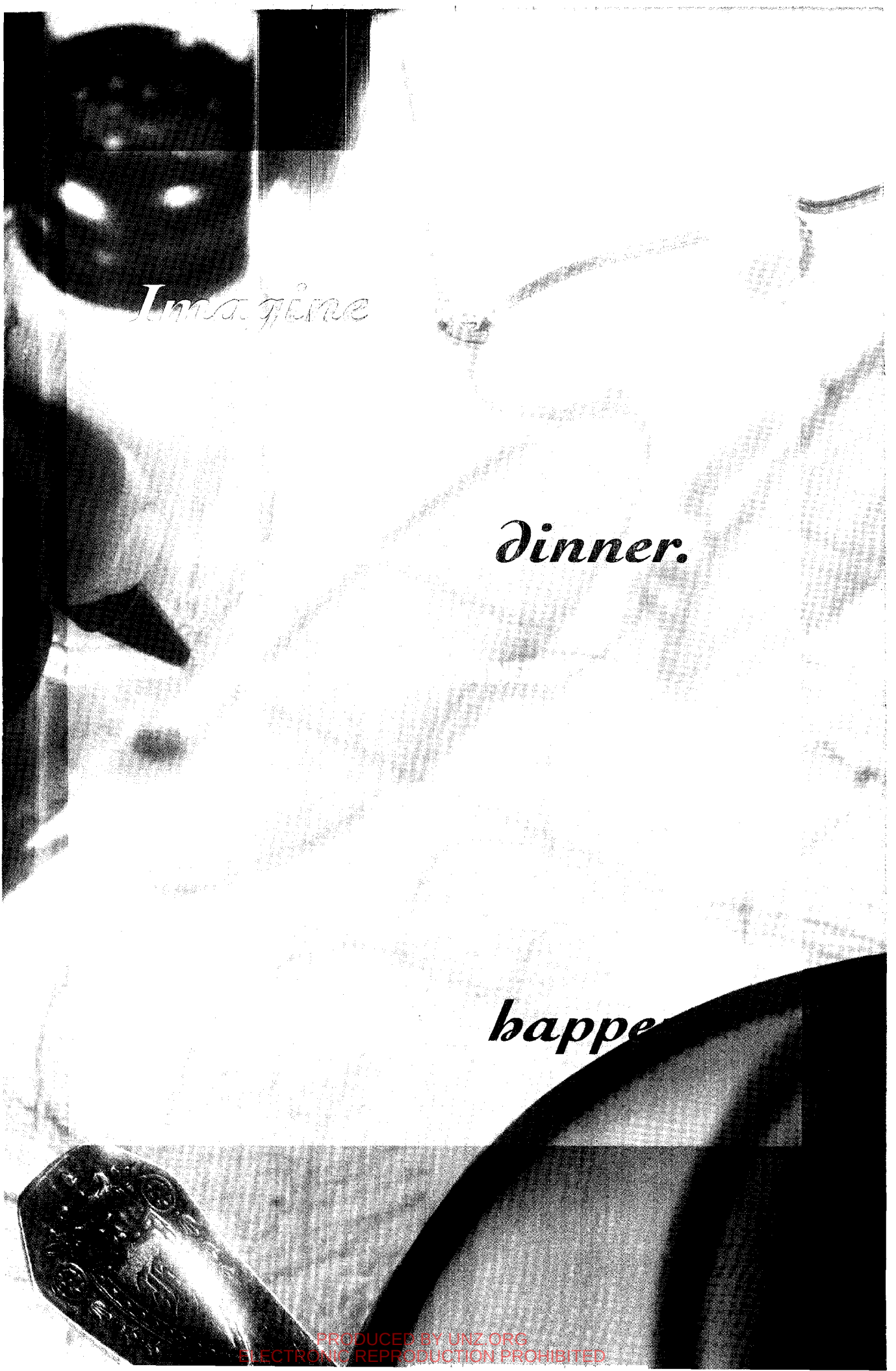

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focus on sending clear messages about what is desirable behavior. When middle-schoolers ask "What is the best time to begin having sex?" teachers in these programs have an answer. It is "Not yet. You are not ready for sex."

Evidently, too, sex education works best when it combines clear messages about behavior with strong moral and logistical support for the behavior sought. One of the most carefully designed and evaluated sex-education courses available is Postponing Sexual Involvement, a program developed by researchers at Grady Memorial Hospital, in Atlanta, Georgia, and originally targeted at minority eighth-graders who are at high risk for unwed motherhood and sexually transmitted diseases. Its goal is to help boys and girls resist pressures to engage in sex.

The Grady Hospital program offers more than a "Just say no" message. It reinforces the message by having young people practice the desired behavior. The classes are led by popular older teenagers who teach middle-schoolers how to reject sexual advances and refuse sexual intercourse. The eighth-graders perform skits in which they practice refusals. Some of them take the part of "angel on my shoulder," intervening with advice and support if the sexually beleaguered student runs out of ideas. Boys practice resisting pressure from other boys. According to the program evaluator, Marion Howard, a professor of gynecology and obstetrics at Emory University, the skits are not like conventional "role plays," in which students are allowed to come up with their own endings. All skits must end with a successful rebuff.

The program is short: five class periods. It is not comprehensive but is focused on a single goal. It is not therapeutic but normative. It establishes and reinforces a socially desirable behavior. And it has had encouraging results. By the end of ninth grade only 24 percent in the program group had had sexual intercourse, as compared with 39 percent in the nonprogram group. Studies of similar programs show similar results: abstinence messages can help students put off sex. It is noteworthy that although the purpose of the Grady Hospital program was to help students postpone sex, it also had an impact on the behavior of students who later engaged in sexual intercourse. Among those who had sex, half used contraception, whereas only a third did in a control group that had not taken the course.

Postponing Sexual Involvement and similarly designed sex-education programs offer this useful insight: formal sex education is perhaps most successful when it reinforces the behavior of abstinence among young adolescents who are practicing that behavior. Its effectiveness diminishes significantly when the goal is to influence the behavior of teenagers who are already engaging in sex. Thus teaching sexually active middle school students to engage in protected intercourse is likely to be more difficult and less successful than teaching abstinent students to continue refraining from sex. This seems to hold for older teens as well. In a 1991 study Kirby points to one curriculum for tenth-graders, Reducing the Risk, which has been successful in increasing the likelihood that abstinent students will continue to postpone sex over the eighteen months following the course. However, although the program emphasizes contraception as well as sexual postponement, it does not increase the likelihood that already sexually active tenth-graders will engage in protected sex. "Once patterns of sexual intercourse and contraceptive use are established," Kirby writes, "they may be difficult to change." For that reason the Grady Hospital researchers have developed a program for sixth-graders, since 44 percent of the boys taking their course in the eighth grade were already sexually experienced (this was true of just nine percent of the girls).

It does not follow, however, that this approach will work for younger children. The evidence strongly suggests that children who are sexualized at very early ages are likely to be victims of sexual abuse and other forms of traumatic sexualization. Teaching refusal skills to a "sexually active" nine- or ten-year-old is not the answer. Such children need far more intensive care and support than can be provided in the classroom.

As it is typically taught, sex education has little effect on teenagers' decisions to engage in or postpone sex. Nor do knowledge-based sex-education programs significantly reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy.

In a sharp break with the Surgeon General's approach, President Clinton's welfare-reform proposal strongly endorses the Grady Hospital approach. Similarly, the President's recent bully-pulpit message to teenagers, counseling sexual postponement and marriage before parenthood, is strikingly at odds with the Surgeon General's message to "get real." Thus the Administration finds itself in the awkward position of advancing contradictory approaches to sex education and pregnancy prevention.

Judging by the available evidence, the President has the stronger case. None of the technocratic assumptions of comprehensive sex education hold up under scrutiny. Research does not support the idea that early sex education will lead to

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more-responsible sexual behavior in adolescence. Nor is there reason to believe that franker communication will reduce the risks of early-teenage sex. Nor does instruction about feelings or decision-making seem to have any measurable impact on sexual conduct. Teaching teenagers to explore their sexuality through noncoital techniques has perverse effects, since it is likely to lead to coitus. Finally, although teenagers may be sexually miseducated, there is no reason to believe that miseducation is the principal source of sexual misbehavior. As we will see, the most important influences on teenage sexual behavior lie elsewhere.

Moreover, if comprehensive sex education has had a significant impact on teenage sexual behavior in New Jersey, there is little evidence to show it. The advocates cannot point to any evaluative studies of comprehensive sex education in the state. Absent such specific measures, one can only fall back on gross measures like the glum statistics on unwed teenage childbearing in the state. In 1980, 67.6 percent of teenage births were to unmarried mothers; eleven years later the figure had increased to 84 percent. Arguably, the percentage might be even higher if comprehensive sex education did not exist. Nevertheless, it is hard for advocates to claim that the state with the nation's fourth highest percentage of unwed teenage births is a showcase for their approach.

The absence of empirical support for comprehensive sex education does not, however, discomfit or deter its advocates. Up and down the sex-education ranks, from the Surgeon General to local advocates, there has been little effort to make a reasoned case for comprehensive sex education. Challenged, the sex educators simply crank up their rhetoric: Criticize sex education, they say, and you contribute to the deaths of teenagers from AIDS.

Nor, for that matter, has there been much critical challenge from the research community. Perhaps this is because comprehensive sex education is a policy crafted outside the precincts of the academy. It is not rooted in a single discipline, or even a set of disciplines, but can best be described as a jumble of popular therapies and philosophies, including self-help therapies, self-esteem and assertiveness training, sexology, and certain strands of feminism.

The unifying core of comprehensive sex education is not intellectual but ideological. Its mission is to defend and extend the freedoms of the sexual revolution, and its architects are called forth from a variety of pursuits to advance this cause. At least in New Jersey, the sex-education leaders are not researchers or policy analysts or child-development experts but public-sector entrepreneurs: advocates, independent consultants, family planners, freelance curriculum writers, specialty publishers, and diversity educators. However dedicated and high-minded they may be, their principal task is not to serve the public or schoolchildren but to promote their ideology.

For better or worse, sex-education advocacy is largely women's work. And there is an unmistakably female bias in the advocates' idea of what is sexually nice. It favors what thousands of American women have told Ann Landers: in their sex lives women would like more talking, more hugging, more outercourse. At the teacher-training workshop I attended, a family planner explained a classroom exercise designed to show all the things we can do without sexual intercourse: we can have children; we can show love and affection; we can gain self-esteem; we can achieve success in life. Reaching her summation, she proclaimed, We can have orgasm without sexual intercourse. After a moment, in the back of the classroom, one of the few men attending cleared his throat and politely protested this ideal of intercourse-free sex.

Comprehensive sex education reflects not just a gender bias but also a generational bias. Despite its verbal swagger, it offers a misty-eyed view of early-teenage sexuality. It assumes that the principal obstacles to responsible sexual conduct are ignorance, guilt, and shame. Once properly schooled in sex and freed of these repressive feelings, boys and girls can engage in mutual sexual pleasuring. But there is a dated quality to this view. Indeed, many of the arguments for sex education are filled with anecdotes from the fifties: Susan Wilson, for one, urges middle-aged teachers to think back and remember how inadequate their own sex education was. Though the educators' notions may accurately reflect what it was like for eighteen-year-old females to come of age before the sexual revolution of the 1960s, they have little to do with what fifteen-year-olds face in the 1990s. The MTV generation may indeed have a distorted image of sex, but it has not been distorted by shame or repression.

Thus comprehensive sex education flunks the reality test not just once but twice. Indeed, much of the evidence suggests that less-comprehensive, more-targeted sex education would be far more effective in reducing early sexual involvement and its associated risks. But more important, comprehensive sex education is woefully out of touch with the realities of teenagers' sex lives. Surely any policy with claims to steely-eyed realism must begin with an appraisal of what the evidence tells us about the sexual lives of today's adolescents, especially teenage girls.

The New Sexual Revolution

THERE is a new sexual revolution in America. Unlike the old sexual revolution, which has been documented and celebrated ever since its boisterous beginnings, in the late 1960s, the new sexual revolution has arrived unheralded. Its vanguard is found not among confident, self-dramatizing students on college campuses but among gawky adolescents in the crowded hallways of the junior high.

The children of the Baby Boom generation are beginning to have sex at earlier ages than their parents did. In 1970, five percent of fifteen-year-old girls and 32 percent of seventeen-year-old girls reported having had sex; by 1988 the

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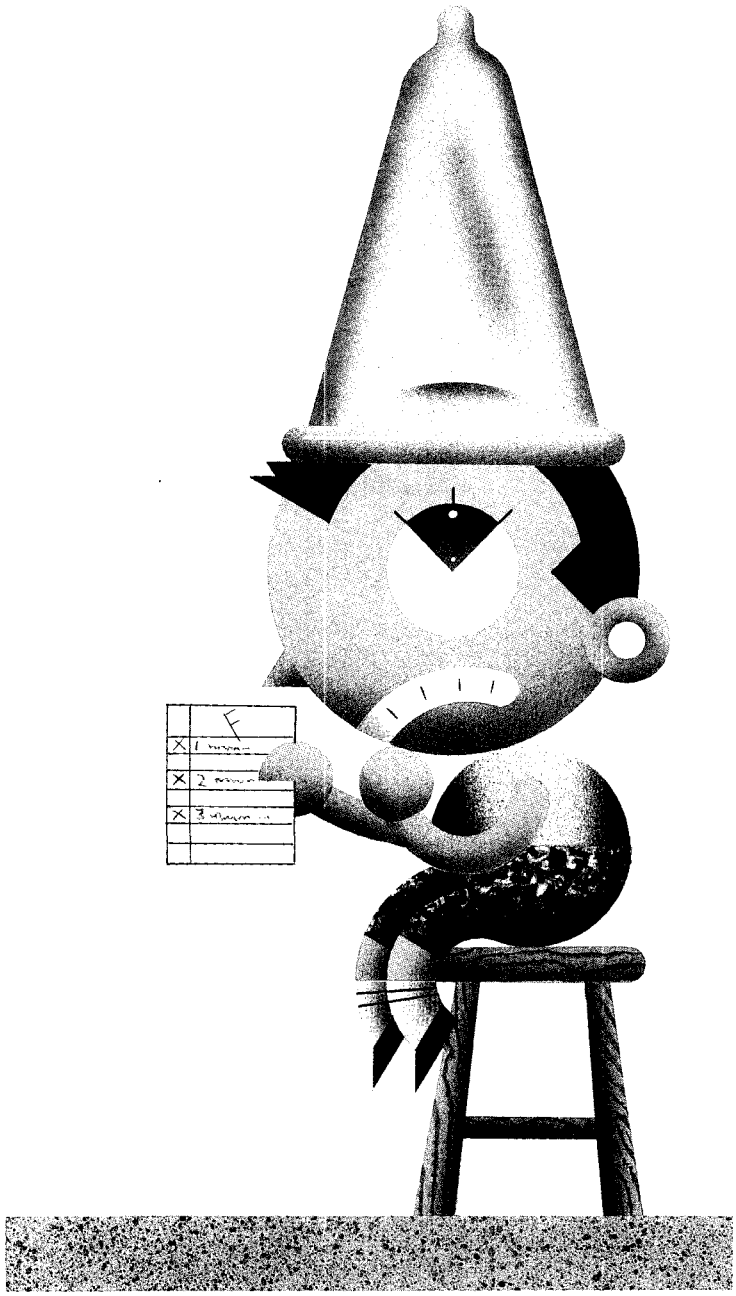
figures had increased to 26 percent of fifteen-year-olds and 51 percent of seventeen-year-olds. By age nineteen nearly 80 percent of young women have had sexual intercourse. As a result of earlier sexual initiation among girls, the historical gender gap in first sexual experience is narrowing; according to the 1988 National Survey of Young Men, one third of teenage males have had sex by age fifteen, and 86 percent by age nineteen. With early initiation, today's adolescents are more sexually active. They have more partners: among never-married sexually experienced teenage girls in 1971, 38 percent had had two or more sexual partners; by 1988 the figure had increased to 59 percent. And they have sex more frequently: the 1988 National Survey of Family Growth reported that 45 percent of never-married sexually active girls had intercourse at least once a week, as compared with 40 percent when the survey was administered in 1982.

But these figures alone do not capture what may be the most striking feature of the new sexual revolution: the rise in the proportion of younger teenagers engaging in sex. The largest relative increase in sexual intercourse among teenage girls has occurred among those fifteen years of age, from 4.6 percent in 1970 to 25.6 percent in 1988. (Below the age of fifteen, the evidence strongly suggests, sexual initiation is involuntary for a large proportion of girls who report having had sexual intercourse.)

Within this overall pattern of earlier sexual initiation there are significant racial and ethnic differences. African-American males are more likely than white or Hispanic males to engage in early sex. At age fourteen, 35 percent of black males have had intercourse; the comparable percentages for white and Hispanic males are seven and six respectively. Apparently because they begin their sexual careers earlier, black males also report more partners than white or Hispanic males (those who are sexually active at age fifteen, for example, report 6.4, 3.5, and 1.9 respectively). Though data comparing teenage girls from all three groups are not available, the evidence points to similar differences between African-American and white females. African-American girls are more likely to have had premarital sex in the early teen years than their white counterparts. However, the differences become less pronounced among older teens. For example, at age sixteen, 24 percent of white girls, and 33 percent of black girls, report having experienced sexual intercourse; by age nineteen the percentages are nearly identical: 76 percent of white girls and 79 percent of black girls.

Family structure strongly influences early sexual activity as well. Daughters in single-parent families are more likely to engage in early sex than girls who grow up in two-parent families. Several factors may be involved: less supervision in the home, less exposure to adults' sexuality, and the lack of a father's steady affection and protection. Girls whose relationships with their fathers have been severely damaged by divorce or their parents' nonmarriage are more likely to engage in a frantic quest for male approval and to seek love



through early sex than are girls from intact families. Both parents and teenagers in divorced families have more permissive attitudes toward sexual intercourse outside marriage. In fact, there is evidence of a kind of sexual trickle-down in families, not just from parent to child but also from older siblings to younger. Teenagers with sexually active siblings are likelier to begin having sex at an early age.

Religiously observant teens are likelier than others to refrain from early sex; the highest level of premarital intercourse occurs among teens with no religious affiliation. At the same time, the University of Michigan sociologist Arland Thornton reports, cause and effect can work in the other direction. Early sexual activity can dampen religious ardor.

In the midst of this sexual upheaval one trend is quite clear: the new sexual revolution has been a disaster for

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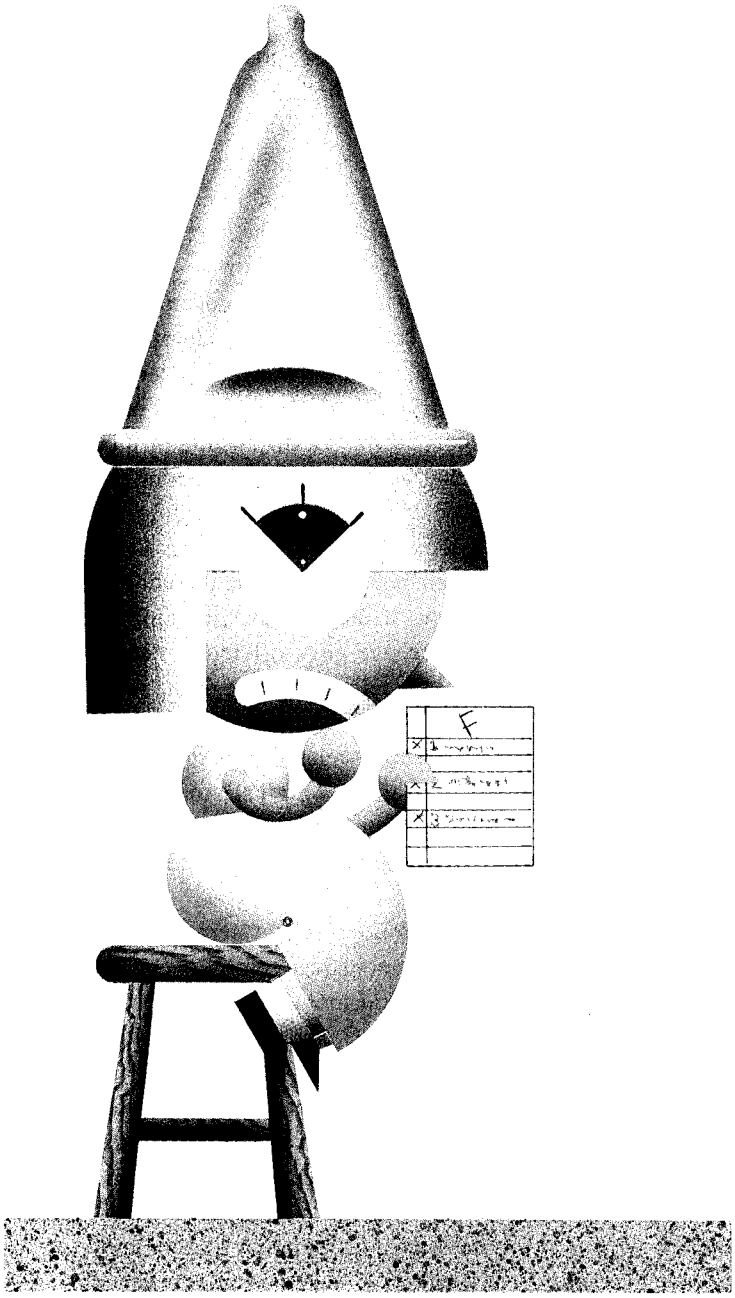

teenage girls. Even more now than in the past, girls bear the heavy burdens and penalties of nonconjugal sex. Early sexual initiation puts girls at increased risk for sexually transmitted diseases. This is partly because teenagers who are sexually active at an early age have more partners and partly because young teenage girls are likely to have older, sexually experienced partners. Some researchers also contend that teenage girls are at greater risk for STDs than adult women because their cervical lining is not yet fully mature and is therefore more vulnerable to pathogens. Whatever their causes, STDs can lead to serious, sometimes permanent, damage to the reproductive system, including infertility, chronic pelvic pain, ectopic pregnancy, and cervical cancer.

And despite reported high levels of contraceptive use among adolescents, teenage girls continue to get pregnant. A million teenage girls each year find themselves pregnant. About 37 percent of teenage pregnancies end in abortion and about 14 percent in miscarriage. Roughly half of all these pregnancies result in childbirth, and since less than 10 percent of teenagers today give their babies up for adoption, teenage childbearing commonly results in teenage motherhood—usually unwed motherhood.

This fact constitutes one of the more perplexing aspects of the new sexual revolution. Teenage girls have greater control over their fertility today than they had in the past, and yet the percentage of births to unwed mothers continues to rise, having already increased from 30 percent among teenagers in 1970 to nearly 70 percent in 1990. In some cities in America 85 or 90 percent of all teenage births are to unwed mothers. Twenty-five percent of all babies born to teenagers are not first children. And the earlier a teenager begins her maternal career, the more children she is likely to have.

Teenage childbearing on this scale has monumental social consequences, both for the mothers and for their young children. In fact, if one wanted to spawn a generation of vulnerable families, one would seek to increase the number of families headed by fifteen- and sixteen-year-old mothers. A single teenage mother is less likely to complete high school or to be employed than her peers, and her child is at greater risk than other children for a host of health and developmental problems, and also for physical and sexual abuse. Both mother and child are likely to experience poverty and its predictable social consequence, chronic welfare dependency. If three risk factors for poverty are present—teenage childbearing, failure to complete high school, and nonmarriage—then it is all but inevitable that the mother and her child will live in poverty: 79 percent of all children born to mothers with those three risk factors are poor.

Exploitative Sex

BEYOND these statistical measures researchers are beginning to piece together a portrait of teenage sexuality in the 1990s. There is still much to learn, but recent research tells us two things: first, fifteen-year-old sex is riskier than eighteen-year-old sex; and second, early-teenage sex is often exploitative sex. This evidence indicates that few young teenagers are ready or able to engage in kinder, gentler sex. In fact, sexual encounters between fifteen-year-olds are likely to be nasty, brutish, and short.

To begin with, there are sharp polarities in the way male and female teenagers approach sex. Despite changes in teenage sexual behavior, boys and girls continue to view love and sex relationships in different ways. Girls look for security, and boys seek adventure. Boys are after variety, and girls want intimacy. The classic formulation still seems to hold true: girls give sex in order to get love, and boys give love in order to get sex. According to one study, more than 60 percent of sexually experienced girls were going steady with or engaged to their first sexual partners, whereas less

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than 40 percent of teenage boys had their first sex with a steady or a fiancée. Boys were more than twice as likely as girls to have had their first intercourse with someone they had only recently met. As Freya Sonenstein, of the Urban Institute, and her colleagues report, "A typical picture of an adolescent male's year would be separate relationships with two partners, lasting a few months each."

Such gender polarities are most pronounced in early adolescence. Boys and girls both experience physical changes during puberty, but these changes carry different psychological meanings. For boys, increases in body weight and size bring an enhanced sense of power and dominance, whereas similar changes frequently provoke ambivalence and anxiety among girls. In a culture obsessed with skeletal thinness as a standard of female beauty and achievement, weight gain can inspire feelings of "grossness" and self-disgust among teenage girls. Carol Gilligan and other researchers have noted a decline in young adolescent girls' feelings of competence and confidence at roughly the same time that adolescent boys are becoming more assertive and, well, cocky.

The younger a girl is when she begins to have sex, the more vulnerable she is to its risks. She is less likely than an older teenager to be in a steady relationship, to plan her first intercourse, or to use contraception. Thus girls who were fifteen or younger at first intercourse are almost twice as likely as eighteen-year-olds to experience pregnancy within the first six months of sexual activity. Nor can it be said that a fifteen-year-old girl really chooses to engage in sex, given the enormous gap between physical readiness on the one hand, and emotional and cognitive readiness on the other. On this point Laurie Schwab Zabin, a researcher at Johns Hopkins University, writes, "Whether or not to engage in coitus, whether or not to contracept, whether or not to bear a child when faced with an unintended conception—are all decisions. Unfortunately, they are often not true 'choices.'" David Ellwood, the assistant secretary of Health and Human Services, puts it even more plainly: "There seems to be ample evidence to support almost any model of teenage behavior except a model of pure rational choice."

Girls who are sexually active at early ages are likely to experience coercive sex. Teenage girls tend to have first sex with male partners who are three or more years older, whereas teenage boys are likely to have their first sexual encounter with girls who are less than a year older. Thus the balance of power is dramatically skewed. Surely one has to be skeptical of claims of "voluntary" sex between girls and much older partners. As one researcher put it, "Could one possibly call the pairings of eleven-year-old girls and twenty-five-year-old men 'dates'?"

Indeed, age disparities between girls and their sexual partners are often markers for sexual abuse. In one study of abused teenage mothers and mothers-to-be, only 18 percent of the girls reported abuse by men near their age, while 46 percent reported abuse by men ten or more years older. Sexual abuse is a significant factor in girls' early sexualization. Studies show that teenage girls who have been sexually abused are significantly more likely to engage in voluntary sexual intercourse and are likely to have intercourse at an earlier age, to be more sexually active, and to engage in a wider range of sexual activities than girls who have not been abused.

Girls' sexual conduct, unlike that of boys, is governed less by hormones than by social controls. But in a cultural climate of sexual freedom, girls have lost much of their authority in boy-girl relationships. Until quite recently girls organized, managed, and regulated the social pursuits of their peer groups, with the strong support of adults. In romantic relationships girls exercised their power by withholding sex, keeping boys in the role of craven sexual petitioners. At the same time, they moved their boyfriends in the direction of commitment and monogamy. "Going steady," the ultimate romantic achievement for teenage girls, offered a pseudo-marriage that might include parceling out some of the sexual favors of marriage. Of course, this system was seriously flawed. In the intimacy of a steady relationship, girls could lose control, "give in," and go all the way. Then they had to deal with the dire consequences of their sexual transgression—a guilty conscience, a ruined reputation, and sometimes an unwanted pregnancy.

The sexual revolution overturned this system of social controls by giving women technological control over their fertility. Its emblematic moment came when college health services began providing birth-control pills to eighteen- and nineteen-year-old women. Liberated from many of the penalties of premarital sex and the burdens of a sexual double standard, women were able to behave like men in their sexual pursuits. Yet although a single standard for men and women promised greater honesty and equity in relationships, it tilted away from women's goals of intimacy and commitment in the direction of what one sociologist has aptly called sexual "freedom with a male bias": no holds barred and no strings attached. (A nosy mother, I once asked my college-age daughter if there were any differences in the way young men and women conducted their sex lives on campus. "Only that girls wait for a phone call the next day," she said.)

In the 1980s, with the advent of AIDS, the condom, an all-purpose contraceptive, gained new favor. As an appurtenance of the sexual culture, the condom led to a second shift in the control of sexuality: it brought back protection with a male bias. Although pressure to engage in early sex did not diminish, teenage girls' ability to protect themselves did. One of the great ironies of the new sexual revolution is that having won the "right" and the freedom to engage in sex at an early age, girls must resort to some of the old wiles and cajolery to get their male partners to use protection. Although girls may carry Trojans in their purse, as the Surgeon General urges, they cannot wear them.

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The Lure of Motherhood

RECENT thinking about unwed teenage pregnancy has focused on the links between teenage motherhood and the economic incentives of the welfare system. Charles Murray and others argue that poor teenagers choose motherhood because it offers economic rewards such as health care, day care, and an apartment of one's own. Yet some of the most compelling research on unwed childbearing among poor teenagers suggests that the strongest incentives for early teenage motherhood may be psychological rather than economic. As Judith Musick argues in her book *Young, Poor and Pregnant*, early pregnancy and childbearing must be understood as a response to the developmental demands of adolescence.

According to Musick, whose research is based on her work as a developmental psychologist and her six years as the director of the Ounce of Prevention Fund, a public-private venture that runs pregnancy-prevention and teenage-parent programs in Illinois, many of the girls most at risk for unwed motherhood grow up without adequate nurturance and protection. Some experience early and traumatic sexualization in households where they are left in the care of their mothers' boyfriends or other "play daddies." Thus the emotional lives of many of the most vulnerable girls are defined by "repeated experiences of personal harm at the hands of those who should be their protectors."

As these girls become teenagers, they bring limited inner resources to the key developmental task of adolescence: the formation of a stable identity. Whereas a more resilient teenager is ready to face the classic questions of adolescence—Who am I? and What will I do with my life? and How will I be different from my mother?—the fragile girl may still be wrestling with questions associated with an earlier developmental stage: Who cares about me? and Whom can I depend on? and Where can I find safety and security?

Through pregnancy and early childbearing a young woman finds a way to reconcile her contradictory needs for autonomy and security. She may be able to draw closer to her mother and to place a claim on maternal affection, albeit indirectly, through a grandchild. And she may even gain the fleeting attention of a wayward boyfriend or a faraway father. Thus early sexual activity and maternity offer a way to retrieve childhood and enter adulthood simultaneously.

Not to be ignored in this developmental drama are the universal satisfactions of motherhood itself. If most new mothers are thrilled with their infants, why would young girls not feel a surge of ecstatic fulfillment? And if mothers everywhere enjoy dressing and showing off their newborns, why would a teenage mother not derive maternal pleasures from such activities? For a disadvantaged girl with few outlets to express herself, exhibit her talents, or win recognition, becoming a mother is a way to be fussed over and admired.

Reinforcing the immediate benefits of maternity are the psychological costs of postponing sex and motherhood. Within the peer group as well as the family, going to school and doing homework can be far less appealing than showing off a baby, particularly if a girl's older sisters and friends have babies of their own. Moreover, as Judith Musick explains, pursuing a dream that does not include early motherhood involves a painful and radical kind of split from mothers and other influential women in a girl's life. So threatening is this separation that many teenage girls on the threshold of change—enrolling in high-school-equivalency classes, completing a job-training program, breaking off with a violent boyfriend—fall back into an abusive relationship, get pregnant a second time, or go back to an old drug habit.

Thus changes in economic incentives, however politically attractive, may not be enough to reduce unwed teenage childbearing. It may be necessary to alter the psychological-incentive structure as well, including "prettifying" the unglamorous business of going to school, doing homework, and earning respectable grades. The process may also include fostering strong relationships with adult women mentors who can exercise firm guidance and give direction as well as support. Finally, it may require some imaginative measures to "uglify" unwed teenage motherhood or even to re-establish some of the disincentives that worked in the past, including separation of the girl from her peer group. Perhaps teenage mothers should attend special high schools, as they do in some cities, rather than mixing with the general high school population. This contemporary version of being "sent away"—though it would not interrupt education—would segregate teenage mothers from nonpregnant teenagers and perhaps change a peer culture that views schoolgirl pregnancy as an unobjectionable, even enviable, event.

The absence of empirical support for comprehensive sex education does not discomfit its advocates. They simply crank up their rhetoric: criticize sex education, they say, and you contribute to the death of teenagers from AIDS.

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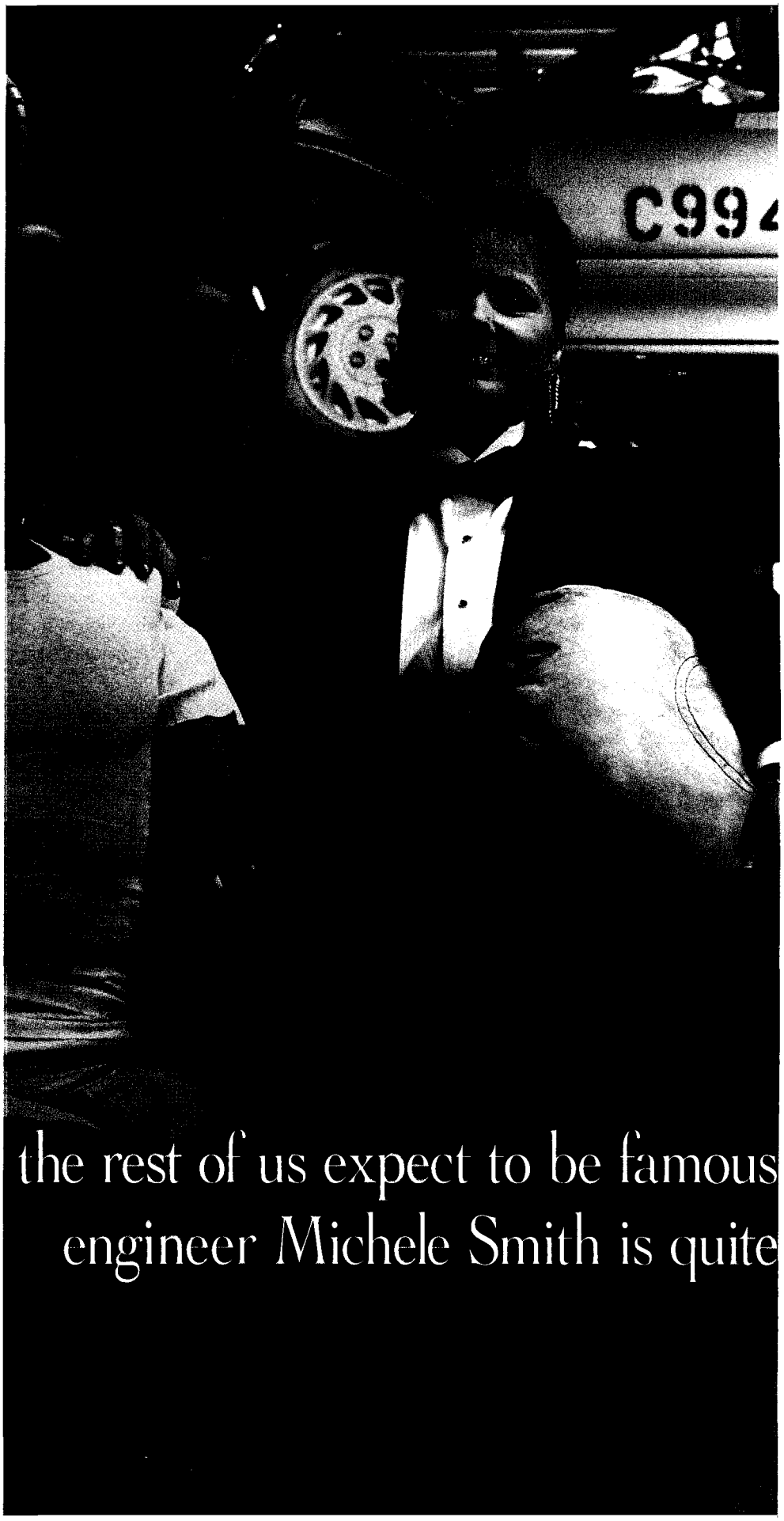

While the rest of us expect to be famous engineer Michele Smith is quite

She doesn't always get the credit for making a Saturn safe, but Michele isn't complaining. She knows Saturn really is a team. And besides, just look at that ritzy crowd she gets to hang out with over there.

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Just a few members of the airbag development team. Michele's the one on the left there.

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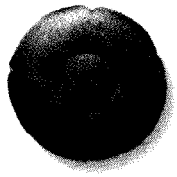

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The Retreat From Adolescence

ADOLESCENCE is a modern social invention, designed to deal with a modern problem: the lengthening period between biological and social maturity. Earlier in the nation's history girls entered puberty and left school at about the same time—around age fifteen or sixteen. Although most young women waited another five or six years before marrying, they continued to live at home; teenage marriages were not common until the 1950s. By the beginning of this century, however, the age of menarche was declining and the period of formal schooling was lengthening. At the same time, parents, churches, and schools were relaxing their close supervision of young women. Many young people were living in cities, where the seductive attractions of the street, the saloon, and the dance hall replaced the more wholesome pastimes of rural life. Under these new social conditions youthful risk-taking became perilous, its penalties more severe.

As a social invention, therefore, adolescence represented a clear effort to define, order, and regulate a life stage that was becoming socially chaotic. Among other things, adolescence provided institutional reinforcement for the moratorium on youthful sexual activity, giving young people the opportunity to acquire the competencies and credentials of adulthood before they took on the responsibilities of marriage and parenthood.

In the past decade or so, however, a new way of thinking about teenage sexuality has emerged. It, too, recognizes the gap between biological and social maturity, but responds with a different set of controls. The new approach contends that teenagers should be expected to express themselves sexually as part of their normal growing up, but should be able to do so protected from the risks of early sexual activity. The way to protect teenagers is to give them the interpersonal skills and the technical tools to manage their own sexuality.

These competing traditions assign radically different responsibilities to adults. In the classic model, adults are the custodians of the moratorium. They secure and maintain this special life stage by establishing familial and institutional controls over teenage sexuality. Indeed, this approach requires some measure of sexual restraint, or at least discretion, on the part of adults in order to set an example. In the contemporary model, adults have a more limited responsibility. Their job is to train teenagers in the management of their own sexuality and to provide access to contraceptives. In the new technocracy adults are called upon to staff teenagers in their sexual pursuits while teenagers themselves are left to decide whether or not to engage in sex. Refusing sex, no less than having sex, becomes a matter of following individual dictates rather than following socially instituted and culturally enforced norms.

One can, of course, imagine a creative synthesis of the two models: a little more freedom for the kids, a little less supervision from busy grown-ups. But this is not what has happened. In the past decade the technocratic approach has gained ground while the classic approach has steadily lost it. This has brought about a corresponding shift in adult responsibility. Increasingly the litmus test of adult concern is one of access: will grown-ups give teenagers the skills and tools to manage their sex lives? Seen in the broader historical context, two seemingly opposing responses to teenage sex—handing out condoms and teaching refusal skills—reflect the same trend toward technocratic solutions and diminished adult responsibility.

There has been a similar shift in public concerns. For most of this century the debate over youthful well-being covered a broad social terrain. The deliberations of the decennial White House Conference on Children, which began in 1909 and ended in the early 1970s, ranged widely from improving health and schooling to building character and citizenship. Today public ambitions and public concern for adolescents' well-being are narrower. Attention has turned to the task of managing the collapse of the moratorium. As a consequence, the entire public debate on the nation's youth has come down to a few questions. How do we keep boys from killing? How do we keep girls from having babies? How do we limit the social havoc caused by adolescent acting out?

There has been, as well, a shift in the notion of responsibility among health and school professionals. As an idea, adolescence is closely identified with the work of the American psychologist G. Stanley Hall. But it was a liberal reform coalition of school, health, and social-work professionals that took the idea of adolescence and translated it into a set of new institutions designed to protect vulnerable city youth from the burdens and responsibilities of too-early adulthood. The juvenile justice system, the youth center, and child-labor laws are all part of that institutional legacy. This coalition also fought hard for sex education in the schools. But today a similar liberal coalition is turning its back on that larger legacy.

The health and school establishments did not create the problems associated with teenage sex. Thus it is impossible not to view their response to these problems with a measure of sympathy. On the front lines of the new sexual revolution, overwhelmed by the clinical evidence of breakdown—thirteen-year-olds with gonorrhea, sixteen-year-olds giving birth for the third time—the youth-serving professionals respond with the tools of the clinic. At the same time, they seem to have lost sight of the meaning and purpose of adolescence and of their own historical role in creating and sustaining it.

Despite its confident assertions, comprehensive sex education implicitly acknowledges a lifting of the moratorium and a return to a more Darwinian sexual environment. What sex educators are offering now is training in sexual survival. Once the kids have been equipped with refusal skills, a bottle of body oil, and some condoms, "reality-based" advocates send them into the world to fend for themselves. Perhaps that is the best protection that today's school and health leaders are able to offer from a harsh and predacious sexual environment. But it is not realism. It is retreat.

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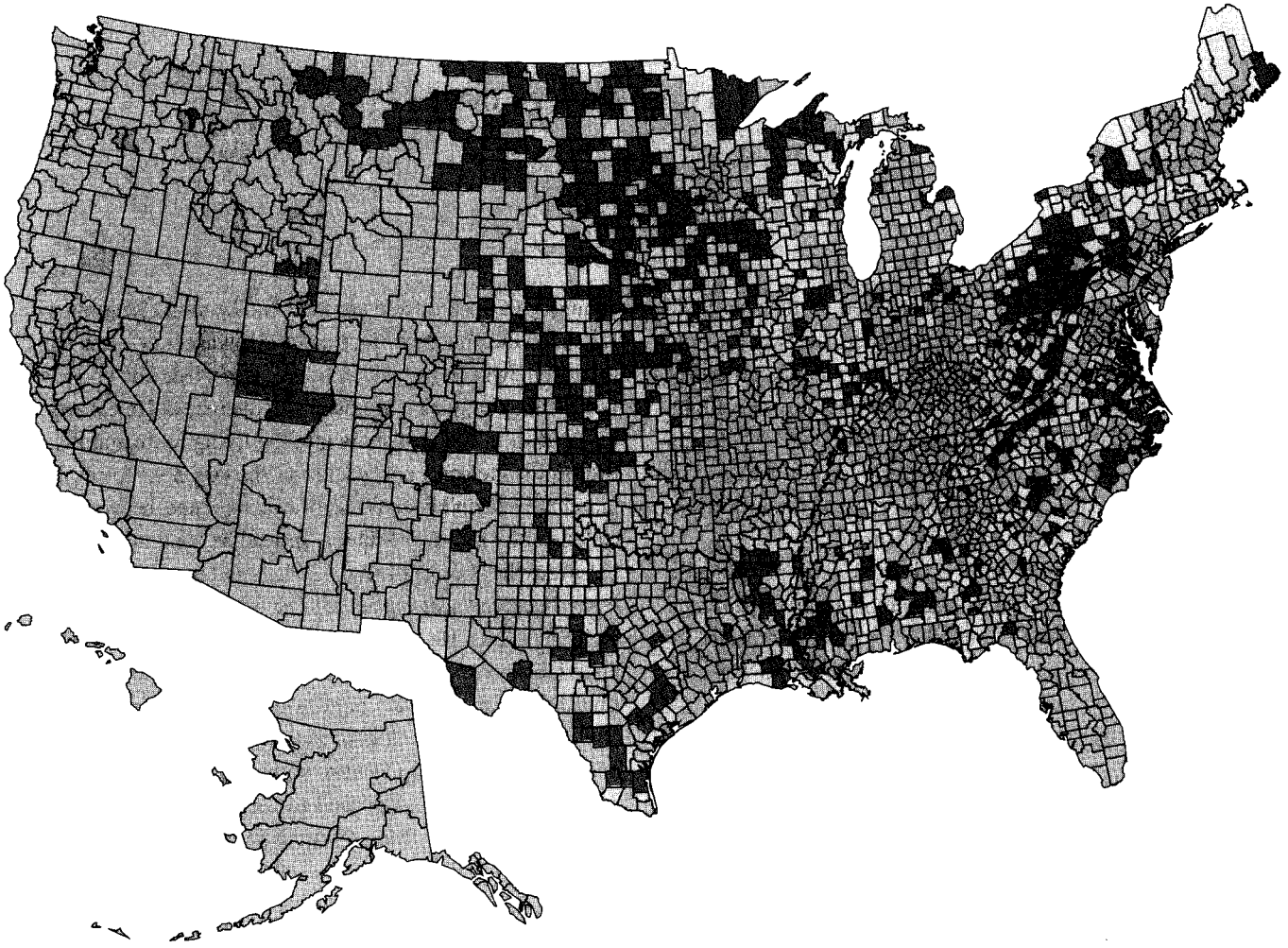
Staying Put



THE map above highlights the counties in America where a larger than average proportion of people have lived in the same house for thirty years or more—a reliable marker for a variety of other demographic factors. At the most basic level, the proportion of thirty-year residents reflects the varying ages of the country's housing stock. As the *New York Times* reporter Sam Roberts noted in his book *Who We Are: A Portrait of America* (1993), about a third of all U.S. houses and apartments are less than twenty years old, and about a fifth are less than ten years old. In Nevada only three percent of all occupied dwellings were built before the Second World War; in Massachusetts the figure is 39 percent. The median age of U.S. dwellings overall, approximately twenty-six years, is lower than the median age of all Americans (about thirty-three years).

In the regions of the country where there is an ample supply of older dwellings, a concentration of thirty-year residents in a community would seem to suggest social stability. In many cases it points to the opposite. The high proportion of thirty-year residents in the North Central states is a direct result of weak employment prospects: large numbers of young adults have moved away from small towns in search of jobs in metropolitan areas, leaving a core of older residents. In the same paradoxical way, the departure of the young accounts for the clustering of long-term residents in the poverty-stricken areas of Appalachia and the Mississippi River delta.

Proportion of residents who have not moved for the past thirty years

- Less than 12 percent
- 12 to 15.9 percent
- 16 percent or more

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

One might expect that Texas, which absorbs more immigrants from Mexico than any other state except California, would have few residents who have stayed in one house for a generation. Yet Texas shows many highlighted counties not in spite of but probably because of the presence of Mexican-Americans. Like Catholics of other backgrounds, Mexican-Americans have a relatively low divorce rate, which is of course a major factor in keeping families in one place. Southern Utah, too, with its large Mormon population, has a low divorce rate and therefore a high proportion of thirty-year residents. *—by Rodger Doyle*

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The Artist

by EDWARD FALCO

JIM had the rearview mirror tilted so that he could see into the back seat, where Alice, his two-year-old daughter, appeared and disappeared and reappeared out of darkness as the car passed under streetlight after streetlight. He had been driving for more than an hour, trying to get her to sleep, and her eyes were still open. He located the dimmer control for the dashboard lights and increased the brightness just slightly, so that he could read the time.

"Daddy," Alice said dreamily, "is it the fairy place?"

"Not yet," Jim answered. It was almost nine. He dimmed the lights. "If you close your eyes, we'll get there faster."

Alice closed her eyes, which surprised him. She was usually harder to fool than that.

A moment later she was sleeping. Each time the light swept over her, she seemed to sink deeper into the car seat, her shoulder-length brown hair blending with the seat's brown padded leather. Jim straightened out the mirror and turned the car around. When he drove Alice to sleep, he rarely traveled more than a few minutes' distance from his house, so that he wouldn't have to waste time driving back once she was out. He was efficient. At forty-six, he was father to three children, all under ten; husband to a doctor; owner of an advertising firm; and, finally, an artist, a video artist, creating pieces that were thought of by some as "experimental" films. He didn't think of them as films, and he didn't think of them as experiments—but he sometimes used the term himself.

He was a father, a husband, and a video artist, who created experimental films. But he hadn't always been any of these things, and today his past was catching up with him

A set of spotlights came on automatically as he pulled into his driveway. He parked the car, lifted Alice from her seat, and carried her up a sloping walk surrounded by flower boxes thick with blossoming azaleas. The polished mahogany door at the front of the house was open to let in the early-summer evening breezes. Jim opened the screen door and stepped into a house so quiet it surprised him. Jake, his four-month-old, would be asleep by now, but Melissa, the nine-year-old, should have been up and around. And he didn't hear his wife, Laura, on the phone or running the dishwasher or doing something somewhere, as he would have expected. The house was just plain quiet, which almost never happened. He carried Alice up a short flight of stairs into the living room and noticed Melissa's sneakers and socks on the rug next to the baby grand. If he hadn't been afraid of waking Alice, he would have called out for Laura or Melissa. Instead he continued on silently toward the back of the house. He found his wife and daughter in the kitchen, sitting at the table with a man who looked to be in his fifties. He had hair down to the middle of his back, pulled into a braid. He wore multiple earrings and a gold nose ring. Where the top two buttons of his shirt were open, Jim could see the bright colors of a tattoo. From the way the three of them sat staring up at him, with grins on their faces, Jim guessed that he was supposed to recognize the stranger. At first he didn't. Then, little by little, he saw the boyish face of Tony Diehl compose itself within the weathered face of the stranger. "Tony?"

Tony touched his chest with his fingertips. "Who else, man?" He stood and opened his arms, offering Jim an embrace.

Laura said, "He came just a few minutes after you took off with Alice." Before dinner she had gone jogging while Jim watched the kids, and she was still wearing her skintight spandex outfit. She looked good. She was five years younger than Jim—and she looked younger than that.

Melissa said, "He's been telling us stories about you, Dad, when you were young."

Laura got up to take Alice from Jim. "Your father's still a young man."

"Oh, please," Melissa said. "Forty-six is hardly young."

Jim handed Alice to Laura. He asked Tony, "How'd you find me?"

Tony grabbed Jim's hand, shook it once, and then pulled him close and wrapped his arms around him. He stepped

Illustrations by Adam Niklewicz

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back and looked him over. "Christ, man," he said. "Twenty? Twenty-five years?"

Jim looked at Melissa and made a little motion with his head that told her she should go to bed.

"I want to stay up," Melissa said. "I want to hear about all the trouble you used to get into."

Jim said, "What have you been telling her?"

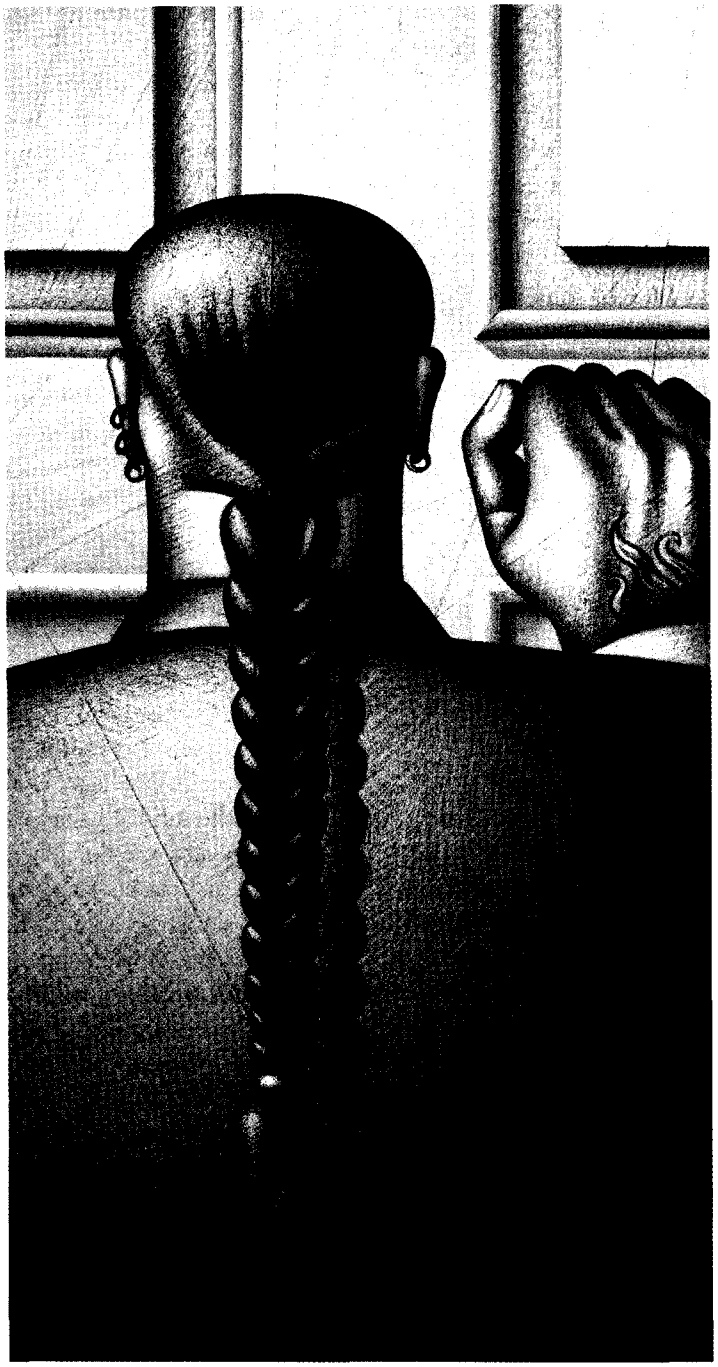
Tony answered, "None of the juicy stuff. Don't worry."

"Pleeease," Melissa said.

Laura, who had been standing quietly in the doorway with Alice, told Melissa to go get her nightgown on. "I'll get them off to bed," she said. "Why don't you guys make yourselves drinks downstairs, and I'll join you when I'm done?"

Tony said, "Sounds good to me."

"I'm going to take Tony out to a bar." Jim put his arm around Laura and kissed her on the forehead. Then he directed Tony toward the living room. On the steps down to the front door he said, speaking loudly and without looking back at Laura, "We have a lot to catch up on." When he looked up, he saw Laura still standing by the kitchen with Alice on her shoulder, her mouth open a little. He called, "I'll be back late. Don't wait up."



Tony waved to her. "Hey. It was nice."

Jim reached around Tony and opened the screen door, his body leaning into Tony's, nudging him out.

"Hey, man," Tony said, as Jim pulled the mahogany door closed tight behind him, "are you hustling me out of your house?"

Jim had on his standard summer outfit: loafers without socks, lightweight khaki pants, and a solid-color T-shirt. He said, "It's getting cool," and went to the back of his car, where a linen jacket was hanging from a hook above the side window. He put on the jacket and took out Alice's car seat while Tony watched.

"What?" Tony said. He opened his hands, as if surprised. "Are you mad at me? I should have called, right?"

Jim put the car seat in the trunk and pointed to the passenger door, indicating that Tony should get in.

"Jesus Christ." Tony got in the car. When Jim got in and started the engine, Tony said again, "Jesus Christ. Some welcome."

"What is it, Tony?" Jim started for the expressway. "Am I not being friendly enough?"

"Hey," Tony said, "we did hang out a lot of years." He flipped the sun visor down and looked at himself in the mirror. "Have I changed that much?" He pointed at the gold ring in his nose. "It's the nose ring, right? The nose ring's got you freaked?"

"You're a funny guy, Tony."

"What's funny? You want to see something funny? Here, I'll show you my tattoo." He started to unbutton his shirt.

Jim grabbed his arm. "Stop it. Tell me why you're here."

Tony leaned back in his seat as if he were suddenly tired.

Jim turned and looked at him. The boyishness he remembered was gone entirely. Tony's skin had hardened and thickened: it looked as though it would feel ragged to the touch. His eyes seemed to have sunk into their sockets, and he had small fatty growths around each eyelid. He was forty-two, four years younger than Jim, and he looked like a man in his late fifties or early sixties, a man who had led a rough life. "So where am I taking you?"

"I thought we were going for a drink."

"You want a drink?"

"Sounds good to me."

"Fine. I know a bar. You want to tell me what's up?"

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"I'm insulted," Tony said. He was lying back in his seat as if too exhausted to move. "After all the years we hung out, I can't stop in to say hello? A social visit?"

"What's the gun for?"

"The gun?" He reached around and touched the middle of his back. "I didn't think you'd see. I mean, I *know* your old lady didn't see nothing." He took a nine-millimeter Beretta out from under the back of his shirt. He placed it on the console between them. "Let me tell you what's happening, man. You'll understand."

Jim said, "Isn't this a social visit?"

"You haven't changed, bro." Tony sat up straight. "Actually, man, I can't believe you. Look at you! You look like Don Johnson, *Miami Vice*. Slick." He slapped Jim's stomach. "How come you don't have a gut, like me?" He held his belly with both hands. "And what kind of car is this, Jimmy?" He looked around the interior. "I never seen a car like this."

"It's a Rover."

"A what?"

"A Rover."

"What the hell's a Rover? Sounds like a dog."

Jim said, "Tell me what's going on."

"I've got a problem. Never mind the drink. You have to take me into the city." Tony stopped and seemed to think about how to continue. Then his thought process apparently shifted. "But, Jimmy, man," he said, "look at you. Stony Brook, Long Island. This is like where the rich people live, right? You're like rich now. You got a doctor wife. You got your own business. You live in a goddamn mansion. You look great, your wife's a piece of ass—I mean, what is this? You're unbelievable, man." Tony reached over and slapped him on the stomach again. "I'm proud of you, man. I'm still a small-time drug-dealing jerk-off, and look at you. I'm proud of you, Jimmy. I mean it."

Jim checked the side-view mirror as he picked up speed on the entrance ramp to the Long Island Expressway. He pulled the car over to the extreme left-hand lane and accelerated to seventy. "What kind of trouble are you in? What do you need?"

"Don't you want to know how I know all this stuff about you?"

"I haven't kept a low profile."

"That's the truth. *The Village Voice*! Not that I would have recognized you from the picture. Where's the curly hair down to your ass?"

"It was never down to my ass. Since when do you read *The Village Voice*?"

"I don't," Tony said. "Ellis showed me."

Jim seemed surprised. "I thought Ellis would have moved on a long time ago."

"Oh," Tony said. "Like, me, you're not surprised I'm still small-time—but Ellis . . . Man, you don't know Ellis. Don't even think you know Ellis. The guy you knew, those years . . . he's like completely gone, totally. He don't even exist anymore."

"What happened to him?"

"Drugs. Twisted stuff. He's a sick puppy, man. If he's alive another month, I'll be surprised."

"Why? What's he got?"

"Not like that," Tony said. He pointed to his temple. "He's sick this way. He's out of his mind. He's not even human anymore, Jimmy. You won't believe the stuff he's into. I tell you some of the things he's done, you'll puke right here, man. Right in the car."

Jim pulled into the slow lane, behind a tractor-trailer. He pointed to the gun on the console beside him. "Put that on the floor or something. I want to pass this truck." Tony put the gun on the floor in the back, and Jim pulled into the passing lane. They were both quiet for a long time then, driving in silence in the dark. When they left Nassau County and entered the city, streetlights suddenly appeared above the road.

"Remember those two guys?" Tony said, as if the lights had suddenly waked him.

Jim didn't answer. He knew what Tony was referring to without having to think about it. "We're in the city," he said. "You want to tell me where we're going? You want to tell me what the hell I'm doing here?" Tony had slumped down in his seat and put his knees up on the dash. Jim knew that Tony was staring up at him, checking his reaction.

Tony reached down into his pocket and came up with a fat manila envelope. He opened the top. "Ten thousand dollars," he said. "I need you to give this to Ellis for me."

Jim took the money and held it up in front of the steering wheel. The bills stuffed into the envelope were held tight with a thick rubber band. He dropped the envelope onto the console. "What's this?"

"It's Ellis's. Jimmy, my man, Ellis has got millions in his place. All in envelopes just like this. He's out of his mind."

"Millions?"

"You don't believe me." Tony put his right hand over his forehead, closed his eyes, and pointed to Jim with his left hand. He looked like a magician about to identify a card. "Look at the back of the envelope. What's the number?"

Jim looked at the back of the envelope. The number was written large with a black marker. "One hundred and sixty-two."

"You do the math."

"Ellis has got a hundred and sixty-two envelopes stashed in his place, each with ten thousand dollars?"

"More. And he counts them. Two, three times a day. Religious."

"Somebody would have killed him for it by now."

"Jimmy . . . Ellis is . . . Everybody's scared of him. Everybody."

"This is the same Ellis I used to play chess with? This is

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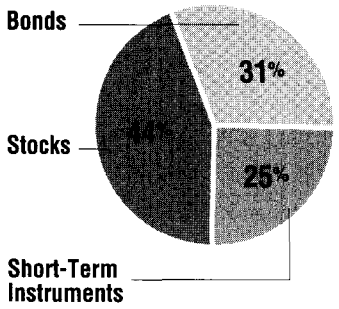

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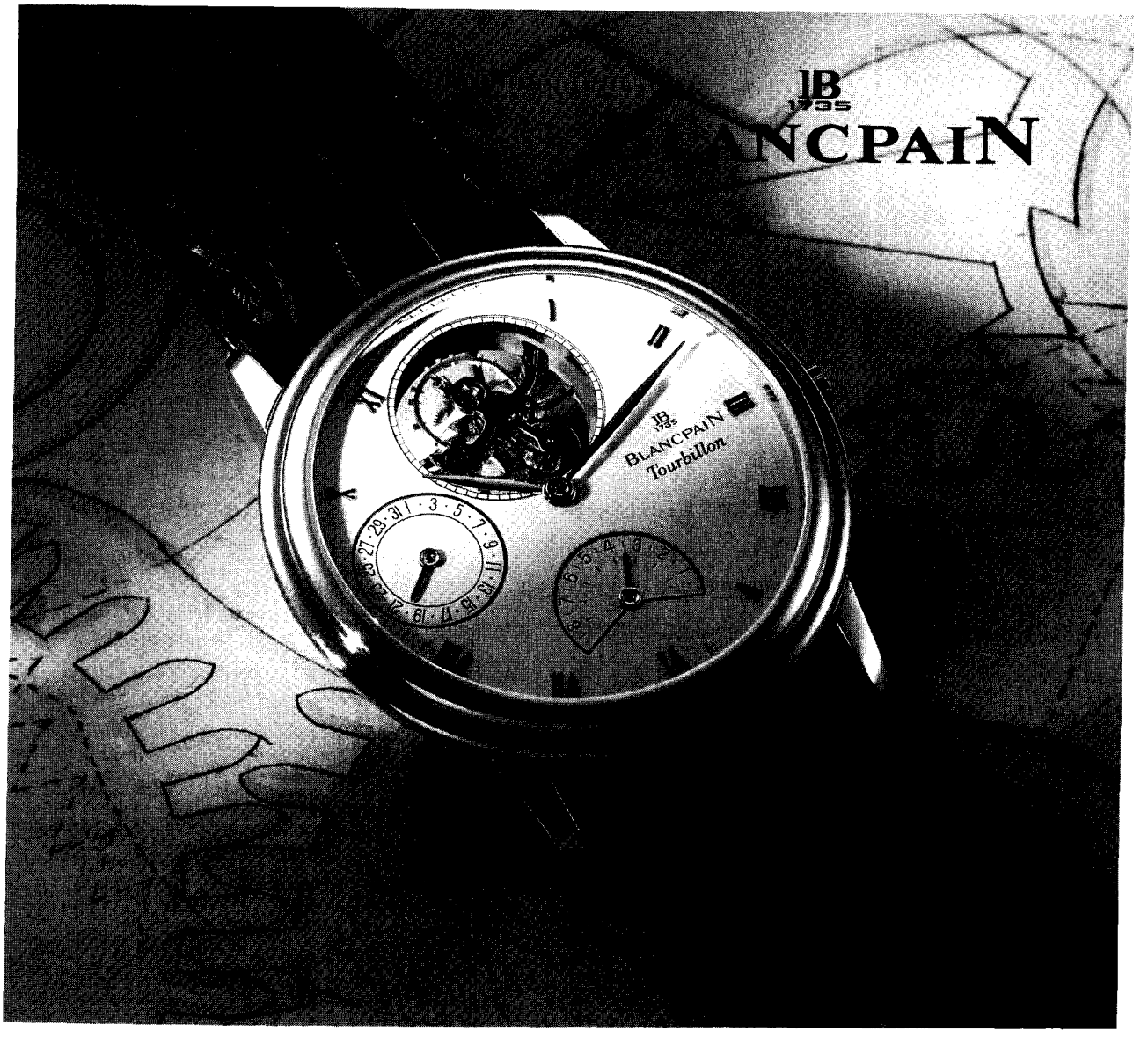

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the Ellis who was our supplier?"

"No, man. I told you. That Ellis is long dead. This is some other guy." Tony reached over his head and turned on the interior light. He said, "Look at me, man," and he leaned close to Jimmy.

Jim squinted and reached to turn off the light.

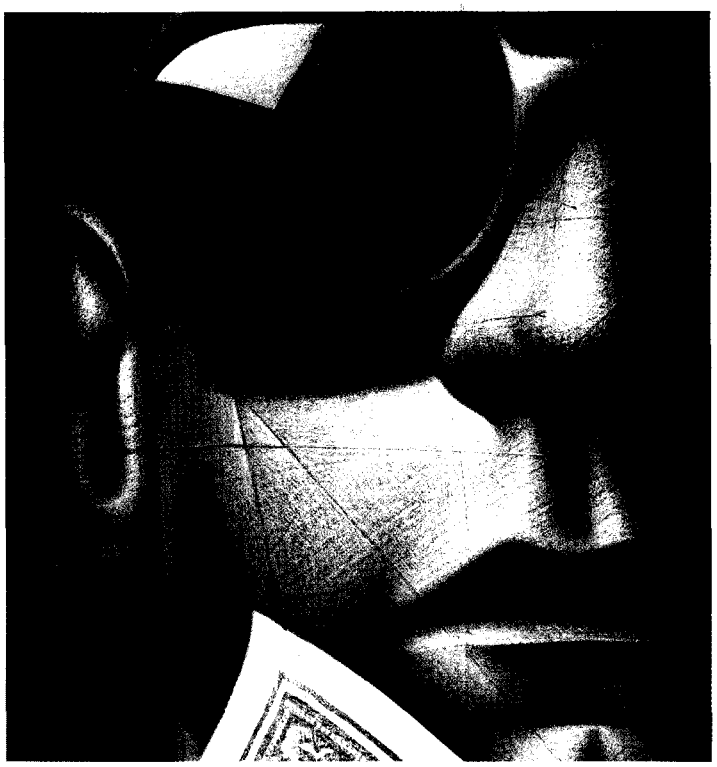
Tony smacked his hand away. "I'm serious," he said. "Look at me."

Jim turned to look at him and then turned back to the road. "I looked at you," he said. "Will you turn off the light?"

"Just listen a minute." He put his hand on Jim's shoulder. "I need you to do me this favor, but you have to understand about Ellis. You can't tell just to look at him." He paused for a moment and then turned off the light. "We're almost there," he said. "I'll tell you a few things."

"Thank you."

"Ellis owns this building; he lives on the top floor—the whole floor. He's got a freezer set up in his living room. He'll show it to you. He shows it to everybody. When he opens it, you're going to see a cop in it." He pointed out of the car, to the right. "Take this exit," he said.



Jim pulled the car to the right, slowed down, and exited onto a cobblestone avenue strewn with garbage. "Where the hell are we?"

"South Bronx. Just stay on this a couple of miles."

Jim slowed down to twenty miles an hour, and even then the cobblestones tested the suspension. The streets on either side of him were empty. Whole blocks had been gutted by fire. "A cop," he said. "He's got a cop in a freezer."

"A dead cop."

"Is this a joke, Tony?"

"I wish."

"You want me to believe this crap? Ellis has got a dead cop in a freezer in his living room, a couple of million dollars scattered around in envelopes . . . It's a joke. What else? Anything else you want to tell me about him?"

"Could I make this up, Jimmy? Really? Ask yourself, if I were lying, would I tell you stuff this wild?" Tony clasped his hands behind his neck and tapped his foot. "I'm getting nervous just coming up here." He jerked around and retrieved the gun from the back floor. "I haven't told you the half of it." He leaned forward and put the Beretta into its holster behind his back. "He sleeps with little girls from the neighborhood. He pays their junkie mothers and they come over in the morning and bathe him —these three little girls. They carry water to his bath. I'm talking eight, nine years old. Same thing at night. It's like some sort of ceremony, some sort of ritual. They fill the tub and then. . ." Tony stopped and shook his head, disgust apparently overcoming him. "He wants me dead, Jimmy, and the guy's a stone-cold, pure-insane murderer. He's got this machete. . ." Again Tony stopped and shook his head. He pointed out the window. "Turn right here."

Jim turned right onto a wide, well-lit boulevard. The area seemed to improve some: the streets were paved, the buildings weren't bombed out, here and there people were sitting on stoops. Alongside him Jim could feel Tony's nervousness. "Let me ask you something, Tony. If Ellis is so bad, why are you still hanging with him?"

"Let me ask you something first," Tony said. "How come it's different for you? You know what I mean? You tell me."

"What do you think? You think the gods picked me up and put me someplace else?"

"So tell me," Tony said. "All I know now is, one day no

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Jimmy. Twenty years later they're writing about you in the paper. You're a big deal."

Jim looked at his wrist, as if checking a watch. "How long have I got? Five minutes?"

"Give me the short version."

"The short version . . . At twenty-five I split to the West Coast, hung out, met this crowd of people who were into art. They got me into school; I busted my ass, got my degrees, met my wife in graduate school, got married, had kids, moved back east . . ." He stopped and looked at Tony. "Then you showed up."

"You know what I think?" Tony said. "I think the gods picked you up and put you someplace else."

Jim was quiet for a moment. "Okay," he said. "I'm not arguing."

"Amen."

"And you?"

"I don't know," Tony said. "Me . . . I got married once. It lasted a couple of years. I hated working. I lifted all day, I loaded trucks. Never had any money." He grimaced at the memory. "I don't know," he said again. "We couldn't have any kids, she wanted kids . . . I screwed around a lot . . ." He stopped and seemed to drift off.

Jim said, "So now you're working for Ellis again, and . . . ? What happened?" He picked up the money envelope. "You ripped him off?"

"Right," Tony said mockingly. "I ripped off envelope number one hundred and sixty-two, hoping he wouldn't miss it. Pull over here." He pointed to an empty parking space in front of an apartment building that looked seven or eight stories high. "We're here."

JIM parked the car. He turned off the engine and slipped the keys into his pocket. He turned to look at Tony, who was looking back at him intently. Tony picked up the envelope and handed it to Jim. "He gave it to me, Jimmy. He handed it to me, just like I'm handing it to you. Then he gets that look that scares me, and he goes, 'You stole my money, Tony. You know what I got to do, don't you?' I go, 'What money? This money?' I try to give him back the envelope. He turns around, goes into the other room, I hear him taking the machete down off the wall—and I split. This is last week. Now I hear from everybody on the street that I'm a dead man. Kill me, you get an envelope. Ten thousand dollars."

Jim leaned back against his door. "And you didn't do anything, Tony. Anything at all."

"What do you mean, am I innocent? Neither one of us is innocent, Jimmy. But I didn't snake Ellis—that's what we're talking about."

"You want me to go up there and see this maniac and tell him what? For old times' sake, he should stop being a lunatic?"

"Listen—"

"If this guy's so crazy, why do I want to deal with him?"

"Jimmy, listen to what I'm trying to tell you." Tony stopped and looked up at the car's ceiling, as if pausing to find the right words. "Ellis is about to be dead—soon. He's like a guy who's reached the end of some kind of twisted road. It's hard to explain this, but I know. I'm sure. He's trying to wrap things up. It's all gotten too warped, even for Ellis. The guy wants to die."

"This is just something you know. Intuitively."

"Yeah, intuitively. But other stuff, too. Like, in the past month he's been showing everybody his money. And he shows everybody the dead cop. Everybody. And he's been ripping people off, ripping them off big time. He hurts people every chance he gets." Tony hesitated for a moment and then shrugged. "And he's wasted a couple of guys. Not street scum. These were guys with connections. With his own hands, with that fucking machete. I mean, Jimmy, he knows what he's doing. Somebody's going to kill him. He won't live out the month."

Jim held the envelope in front of him. "So let's say you're right. Why is he going to take this back from me? If what you say is the case, he wants you dead. Like wrapping up loose ends. Maybe he'll want me dead too."

"He doesn't want you dead. He wants you to make a movie about him."

"He wants what?"

"He wants you to make a movie about him. That's all he's talked about since he saw the article."

"He wants me to make a movie about him?"

"It fits, man. It's like the end of his life, like his memoirs. He's been writing it all down, like a script. When he gets it done, he plans on coming out to see you."

Jim turned away from Tony. At the entrance to the apartment building, in front of its thick glass doors, someone had left a McDonald's bag with a cup and a fries container next to it. Jim said, "Tony, I don't make movies."

Tony said, "You want my advice, don't tell Ellis that."

"And what am I supposed to tell him?"

"Listen, Jimmy. I wouldn't ask for this favor if I thought it would screw you. You're an old friend. We were tight once. All you have to do is go up there, tell him Tony told you he wants you to make this movie about him, tell him you'll make it if he'll take the money back and let it be known he's not looking for Tony's head anymore. That's all you got to do. He'll go for it. I know he'll go for it. He asks you why, tell him old times' sake. Tell him you been through some stuff with me—he knows that anyway."

"Except I don't make movies. What I do is nothing like a movie."

"It don't matter," Tony said. "You're not listening to me. Tell him you're going to get Steven Spielberg to direct the thing. Tell him Clint Eastwood's going to play him, and it'll open in a million theaters all over the world. Tell him any-

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thing. It doesn't matter. In a month he'll be dead." Tony touched Jim's knee. "This isn't going to cost you, Jimmy. You keep me alive, and it doesn't cost you anything."

"Except," Jim said, "what happens if in a month he's not dead?" He looked through the dark car to Tony. Their eyes met and locked. He said, "I'm sorry, Tony. I can't do this."

"Yeah, you can," Tony said without hesitating. "Remember those two guys in SoHo? Their friends got a long memory, Jimmy."

"You'd blackmail me?"

Tony took the Beretta out of its holster and laid it on the console between them. "Take this if it makes you feel safer. This is my life we're talking about. If you won't do it because it's decent, because you owe me at least something—then you force me to push a little."

JIM looked out the window at the litter in front of the building. Then he got out of the car, holding the envelope. When he reached the glass doors, he found that they were locked. Beyond them was a small empty space and then another set of glass doors leading into a carpeted lobby, where a young man wearing a crisp white shirt, a thin yellow tie, and a lightweight navy-blue jacket sat at a desk. He was watching a portable television. Jim knocked on the glass, and when the man didn't look up, he grabbed the handle and rattled the door. The man at the desk jumped, startled. When he focused on Jim, he looked him up and down a moment. Then he hit a button. Jim heard a click and pulled open one of the doors. When he reached the second set of doors, they were locked. The young man grinned and pointed to a telephone hanging on the wall. Jim picked up the phone. The man put a handset to his ear. Jim said, "Ellis Tyler. Top floor."

The man stared at him through the door as he spoke into the handset. "Who are you?"

"James Renkowski."

"'James Renkowski' don't tell me a thing, ace." The grin had disappeared. "What do you want?"

"I'm looking for Ellis. I'm an old friend."

"An old friend," he repeated. The grin reappeared—more a sneer than a grin. He put the handset down on the desk and pulled another phone in front of him by yanking at a gray wire. He punched a few numbers and spoke to someone. Then he hung up and stared at Jim unblinkingly until an elevator door at the back of the lobby opened and another two young men stepped out. Like the kid at the desk, they were dressed neatly, wearing white shirts and narrow ties under summer jackets. When they reached the first set of doors, Jim heard a loud click and they pulled the doors open. They both nodded casually toward him in the way of a greeting. Jim nodded back.

The ride up was quick. His escorts stood one on either side of him. They were relaxed and quiet, and he didn't feel any pressure to speak. When they reached the top floor, the elevator opened onto a small carpeted area where two chairs bracketed a door that looked as though it was made of solid steel. One of the young men sat down heavily, as if tired, and the other opened the metal door for Jim.

Jim hesitated a moment and then stepped into a room that was dark and smelled of incense. His shoes partly disappeared into a plush black rug. The room contained a black leather couch and a teak coffee table. Jim was about to take a seat on the couch when Ellis wandered into the room. He entered casually, his eyes on the floor, hands in his pockets, absorbed in his thoughts. When he looked up, he appeared almost surprised to see Jim. "This is a shock," he said, his voice soft, nearly a whisper. "You're one person I thought I'd never see again." While he spoke, he kept his hands in his pockets. He was dressed immaculately. His clothes—a dark-blue suit and a silk shirt buttoned to the collar—were tailored to a body as thin and lanky as a marathon runner's. He was tall, six foot something, and—just as Jim remembered—he stooped slightly, habitually, from the shoulders down, in the manner of a tall man used to dealing constantly with shorter people. His long hair was slicked back on his head, and he wore glasses with thin lenses in sleek frames. He said, "You've caught me at an awkward time, Jimmy. I have a business meeting coming up."

It took Jim a moment to respond. When he spoke, he was

INWARD

Her eyes are staring inward
into a space as endless
as the distance from here to the mountains

she has forgotten. Between
those peaks and this high cave
lies the drowned valley floor where it happened:

whatever gave her the look
of a violated woman
or a bird that clings to a storm-struck mast

and made everything fade—
like being formed from clay and breathed
into life. Or a god's visitation.

—FROM *TWELVE SIBYLS*
BY RUTH FAINLIGHT

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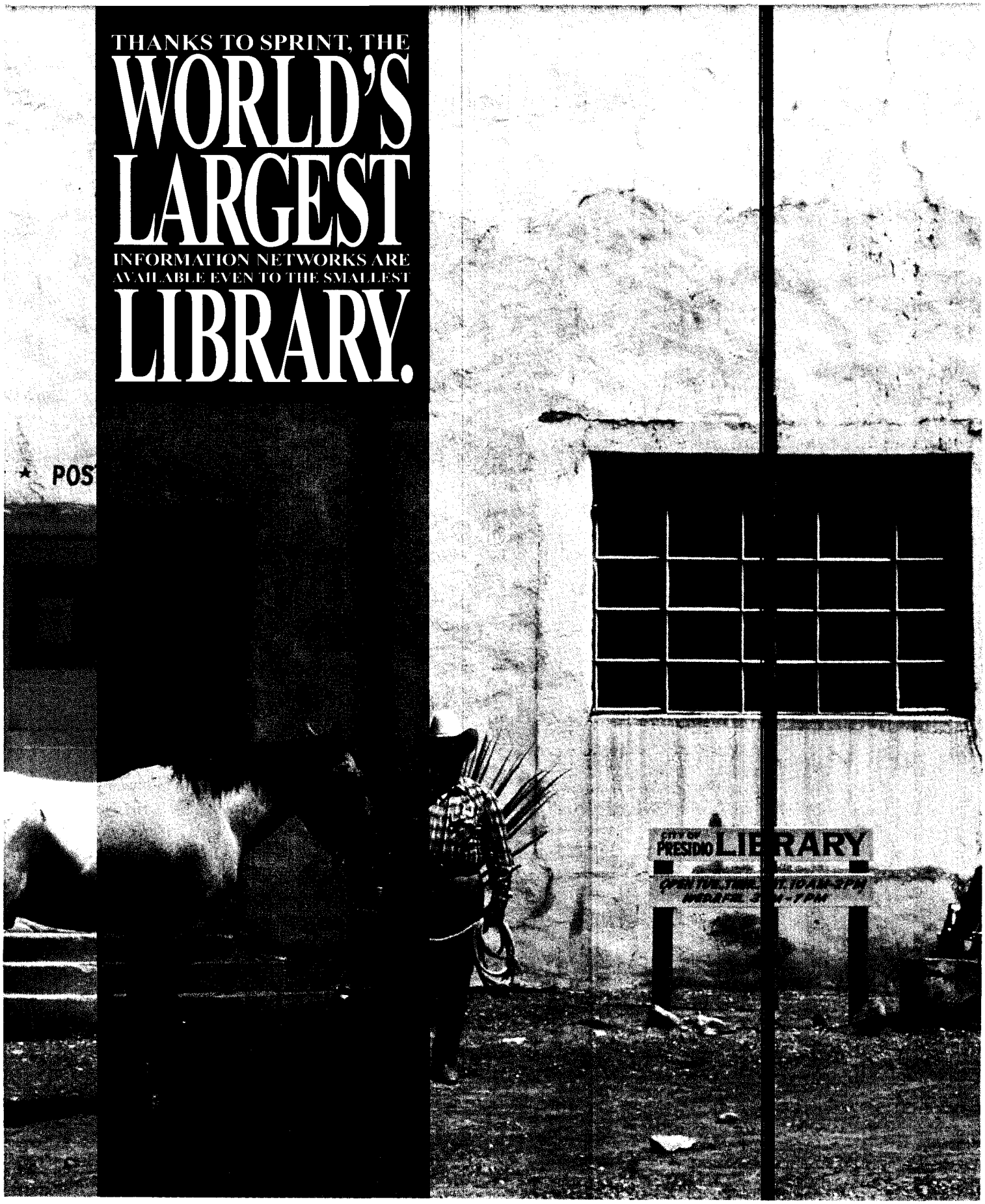

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surprised at the ease in his voice and manner. "Ellis," he said. "You look different."

"You think so?" Ellis spread his arms and looked down at himself. Then he seemed to remember. "That's right," he said. He pointed at Jim and his eyes brightened a little. "You knew me in my fat days." Then he put his hands back in his pockets. "A long time ago, Jimmy."

"You look good."

"I'd invite you in . . ."

"No," Jim said. "That's okay. I'm here because of Tony." He reached into his jacket pocket and took out the manila envelope.

When he saw the envelope, Ellis touched his hands to his temples. "I should have guessed," he said. Then he added, as if surprised at himself, "It didn't occur to me."

Jim said, "It wasn't a meeting I was prepared for either." He extended the money toward Ellis.

Ellis took the envelope and tossed it onto the coffee table. He said, "Come in for a minute."

Jim followed Ellis through a series of dark rooms into a large open area that appeared to serve as a combination living room, bedroom, dining room, and bath. One wall was a row of open windows with a view of the Manhattan skyline. A line of crepe curtains fluttered in a breeze. The other walls were solid and barren: no art, no ornamentation of any kind. In one part of the room a teak dining table was surrounded by straight-backed chairs. In another part was a queen-sized bed in a teak frame. Next to the bed was a freestanding marble bathtub with brass claw legs. Next to the bathtub were three brass buckets the size of small garbage cans. As Jim walked past the open windows, his knees went loose and watery from the height. He glanced down at the street and noticed, several blocks away, a newspaper kiosk next to a public telephone.

Ellis said, "I'm sorry I can't be more sociable, Jimmy." He took a seat on a couch and motioned Jim to sit across from him.

Jim took a seat, and Ellis made a gesture with his hands indicating that Jim should talk.

"He wants you to take the money back."

"What does he think—that because we all used to be friends . . . ?"

"Something like that," Jim said. "He asked me to cut a deal with you."

"A deal?"

"He thought you might be interested in having me do a movie. About you. About your life. He thought—"

"A movie?" Ellis said. "You don't make movies, Jimmy." He opened his hands as if to ask Jim what he was talking about. "I've read about you. I saw your show. What you do, it's a kind of poetry with visual images."

"That's true," Jim said. "But I thought—"

Ellis put his hand up. "Stop, Jimmy. Don't embarrass both of us. Tony's not worth it." He turned around on the couch and leaned toward the windows, drawing in a deep breath of air as if he needed the fresh air from the open windows to help him breathe. He filled his lungs and exhaled slowly. Then he turned back to Jim. "The fool tried to steal from me. He took an envelope with ten thousand dollars and replaced it with one with a few hundred. He thought I wouldn't notice. If I ever see him again, I'm going to kill him. If anybody who works for me ever sees him, they'll kill him." Ellis leaned forward. "There's nothing you can do for him."

Jim said, "Ellis . . ."

"Jimmy." Ellis's face tightened, and a hard note came into his voice. "Come here," he said. "Let me show you something." Ellis put his hands on his knees and lifted himself from the couch as if it were an effort, and Jim followed him into an adjacent room with an eight-foot-by-three-foot waist-high rectangular structure situated at its center like an altar or a cenotaph. The structure was covered with red drapery. At the back of the room was a worktable with a huge metal vise at one end. On the worktable a chainsaw rested next to a power drill and a set of pliers. A machete at least three feet long hung on the wall above the table. The blade was blood-stained, and there were lines of blood on the wall.

Jim said, "How long you been into woodworking, Ellis?"

Ellis looked at the worktable and then back to Jim. He didn't laugh. He pulled the red drapery off the structure, revealing it to be a freezer with a thick black cord that trailed off into the black carpet. He said, "This is something I learned from you," and lifted the heavy white door of the freezer. Inside was a young man in a blue New York City police uniform. He looked like he wasn't yet twenty years old. His skin was an ugly deep hue of purple. His eyes were open under bushy black eyebrows. Half his body was encased in ice, as if he were floating in it, his chest and face and the tops of his legs protruding above the cloudy surface.

Jim said, "You didn't learn this from me, Ellis."

"When you were just coming up, you cracked a guy's head open with a blackjack. Big public place, some bar. Everybody knew who you were."

"You've got the wrong guy. Never happened."

"No, I don't, Jimmy." Ellis grasped the edge of the freezer with both hands and leaned over it, looking down at the frozen body. "I'll tell you something nobody else knows." Still leaning over the freezer, he looked back at Jim. "I didn't kill him. He's like road kill. I found him. That's why the cops have no idea. There's nothing to connect me. I just saw him on the street, threw him in my trunk, took off. But I tell all the punks I have to deal with, all the small-time pushers—like you used to be—that I wasted him. They come in here, see a dead New York cop in a freezer, they'd put an ice pick through their mother's heart before they'd screw me."

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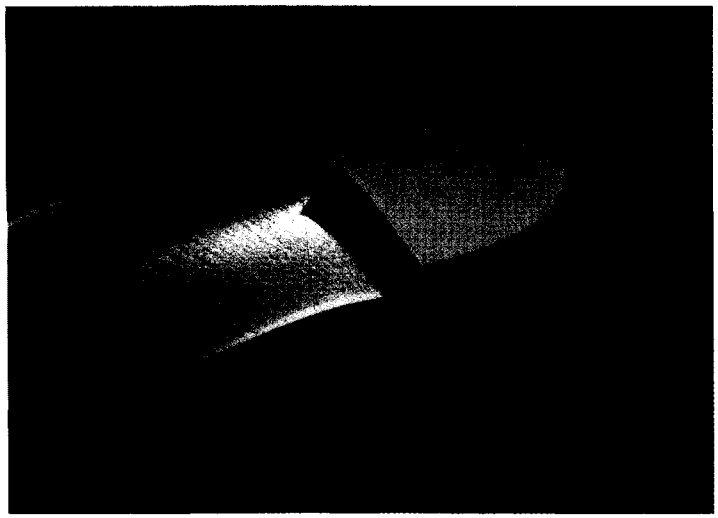
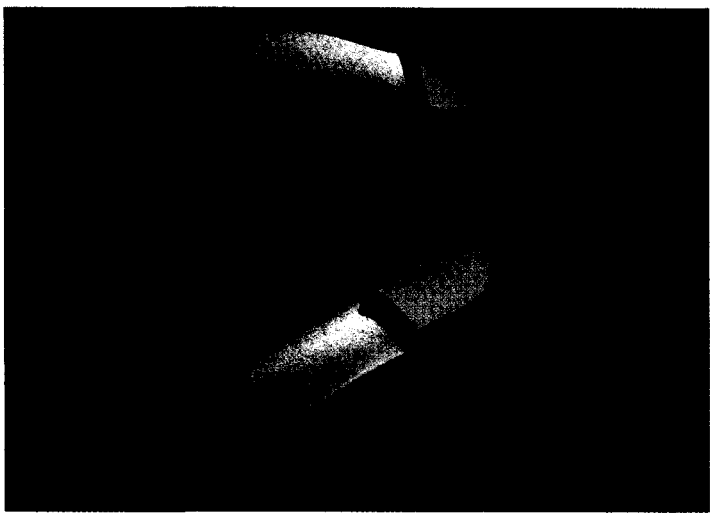
Jim turned his back to the freezer. Through the room's open door he could see the living-room windows and the lights of Manhattan.

Ellis said, "So now we don't have to talk any more about Tony."

Jim didn't respond, and then Ellis was quiet for a time. When he turned around, he saw that Ellis was still leaning over the freezer, staring down at the frozen body, but his eyes seemed vacant. Jim said, "I'd better go, then."

Ellis nodded. He reached into the freezer and rubbed away frost covering the metal badge pinned to the cop's uniform. "Shield 3266," he said, and he closed the lid. Then he put a hand on Jim's back and led him out of the apartment to the elevator, motioning the young men stationed outside the apartment to stay where they were. When the elevator doors opened, he put a hand on Jim's shoulder. "You got lucky," he said. "Don't let it get screwed up on you." Then he pushed him into the elevator and turned away before the doors closed. Jim watched him walk back to his apartment as the two young men stood on either side of the door, as stiff as palace guards.





TONY was waiting for him on the street, leaning back into the shadows of a small alley between apartment buildings. Jim had already walked past him when he stepped out of the darkness. "Jimmy," he said.

Jim laughed. He said, "You don't have to hide, Tony. It's straightened out."

"He went for it?"

"You're surprised?"

"No, I'm not surprised." He slapped Jim on the shoulder, a kind of congratulations or thanks. "I know Ellis, man. I know him like I know myself. What'd he say?"

"He's like a little kid. He's talking about who's going to play who, where we're going to shoot it, that kind of stuff."

"And me? What'd he say about me?" He took Jim by the arm and pulled him back into the shadows of the alley.

Jim reached out and held Tony by the shoulders. "Look," he said, "I can't tell you he's happy with you. You have to go up and deal with him. You have to explain yourself to him."

"He's going to burn me, man. I know it."

"No," Jim said. "We have a deal. I make the movie, he doesn't hurt you."

"He doesn't *hurt* me, or he doesn't *kill* me?"

"He doesn't do anything to you."

"Are you sure, Jimmy? Because that guy can hurt people so bad they'd rather be dead."

Jim said, "No, Tony. This is a formality. This is for show. You got to go humble yourself up there. You know what it is. He'll make you grovel. He'll make sure the others see. You have to do it, Tony. It's for business."

Tony looked down at the ground as if thinking things over. When he looked up, he said, "You sure about this, Jimmy?"

"Absolutely, Tony." Jim took Tony's hand and held it between his two hands. "It's cool," he said. "He wants Tom Cruise to play you in the movie."

Tony shouted, "Tom Cruise!" Then he laughed.

"All right, listen, can I go home now?" Jim reached into his jacket pocket for his car keys. "My wife'll be asking me questions for the next six months."

Tony stepped back for a moment as if to look Jim over,

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and then embraced him tightly. "You saved my life, man. I got to thank you."

Jim whispered, "I just hope you're right, Tony. About Ellis not being around another month."

Tony stepped back. "Was I right about the movie?"

Jim smiled. Then he shook hands with Tony, and Tony hugged him one more time before walking away, out of the shadows and into the lights from the apartment building.

Jim watched from the driver's seat of his car as Tony waited for a short while on the street and then disappeared behind the glass doors. Within a minute or two he heard the muted sound of shouting voices, one of them clearly Tony's. Then silence. He drove to the newspaper kiosk he had seen from Ellis's apartment and parked in front of the pay phone. When he stepped out of his car, he heard a scream, distinctly, though he couldn't tell for certain where it came from. He looked up and found Ellis's windows. He kept his eyes on the windows as he picked up the phone and dialed 911. He could see Ellis's apartment. The crepe curtains had been sucked out by the breeze. They fluttered over the street. He gave the operator Ellis's name, the location of the apartment building, and the apartment number. He told her about the dead cop. The operator didn't sound interested. She wanted his name. He told her the dead cop's badge number and hung up.

He drove a block or two away and found another place to park where he could still see Ellis's windows. A second or two after he turned off the lights and ignition, two police cars sped past him. Then police cars and paddy wagons and unmarked cars were speeding down every street and through every intersection in sight, sirens screaming. Ellis came to a window and looked out. His hair was wild. He was no longer wearing his jacket, and his shirt was open to the waist, as if the buttons had all been ripped off. The three young men came, and one pulled him away while another closed the window. They disappeared, and a minute later the sound of gunshots crackled over the street. It lasted only a minute or two, but a thousand shots seemed to have been fired in that time. Then Ellis appeared again at the window, this time in the arms of a burly cop. Other uniforms seemed to be wrestling with the cop who had Ellis. A brawl was going on. The burly cop broke away from the others and the window shattered and half of Ellis's body hung out the window for a second—and then he was flying toward the ground, his arms extended in front of him as if he were diving. Jim got out of the car and walked to the entrance of the apartment building, where a crowd was gathering behind police lines. He waited until the ambulances came and men and women in blue coats began carrying away bodies in black zippered bags. After he counted five bodies, he left.

On the way back to Stony Brook he practiced not thinking. He tried to concentrate on his home and family, on his life with his wife and children, on projects that engaged him. When a disturbing thought or image came to mind—Ellis flying through the window, the shattered glass around him like the surface of water breaking, or Tony embracing him on the street, thanking him for saving his life—when such an image or thought came to mind, he would stop thinking and make himself go numb until it dissolved. Then he returned to thinking about his everyday life. For most of the ride home he was numb and empty of thought, and at one point he felt himself getting shaky with the fear that something terrible had happened, that his life would change, that he wouldn't be able to go on living the life he had built with Laura, for Melissa and Alice and Jake, and for himself. He shook his whole body, like a dog shaking water from its coat, and he told himself that he would do what he had to do, as always.

AT home he found everyone asleep. In their bedroom Laura lay on her back, with the baby alongside her in a cradle. Alice had crawled into bed with her. She lay on her stomach with her head snug against her mother's breast and one leg flung on top of her mother's knee. Jim quietly removed a pair of pajamas from his dresser, went to the basement to shower, and returned to join Laura and Alice in bed. He checked the alarm clock on the headboard. It was only a little after midnight. In an hour or two Melissa would wake up and try to get into bed with everyone else. She was going through a stage of regular bad dreams, and most nights Jim would have to hold her and comfort her and persuade her to go back to her own bed. Usually she'd tell him that she was afraid of her bed—she was afraid that something was under it. He'd take her back to her room and show her that nothing was under the bed, and then he'd lie with her for a while and she'd huddle close to him, careful that no part of her body extended over the edge of the mattress. This night, he thought, he'd let her sleep with them.

Alongside him Alice moved slightly, and he laid the palm of his hand on her small shoulder, her soft skin warm and comforting. He tried to close his eyes, but they kept opening, as if with a will of their own. He imagined he was lying on a raft, a cedar raft of logs strapped together, and got to the point where he could feel the bed rocking, as if it were floating, and in his mind's eye he saw the stripped white logs of the raft as they drifted over a sea of murky water—but still he couldn't fall asleep. Hours later, when the quality of the darkness began to soften and the first few birds began to chirp and squawk, when he started working out in his mind the structure for one of his video pieces, when he began thinking about images and the way he might put them together, the image of Ellis flying from the window, the image of the young cop in the freezer, the bodyguards, Tony—when he began shaping and structuring the project in his mind, when he knew for sure that one day he would begin to work on it, then the tension in his muscles eased up some, and he closed his eyes, and when the sun came up, he was sleeping.

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HOME TOWN

by IAN FRAZIER

A writer revisits the Ohio town where he grew up

WHEN glaciers covered much of northern Ohio, the land around Hudson, the town where I grew up, lay under one. Glaciers came and went several times, the most recent departing about 14,000 years ago. When we studied glaciers in an Ohio-history class in grade school, I imagined our glacier receding smoothly, like a sheet pulled off a new car. Actually, glaciers can move forward but they don't back up—they melt in place. Most likely the glacier above Hudson softened, and began to trickle underneath; rocks on its surface absorbed sunlight and melted tunnels into it; it rotted, it dwindled, it dripped, it ticked; then it dropped a pile of the sand and rocks it had been carrying around for centuries onto the ground in a heap. Hudson's landscape was hundreds of these little heaps—hills rarely big enough to sled down, a random arrangement made by gravity and smoothed by weather and time.

In town the blocks of the sidewalks conformed to the rises and dips as best they could, tilting this way and that. Walking in the landscape was like finding a step where you hadn't expected one or not finding one where you had. Driveways tended to take unpredictable dips that would scrape your car's rear fender as you were backing out; lawns had sudden drop-offs where a lawn mower would cut down to the dirt and try to skid away. Fog pooled in the dips and not in the rises, so that, driving on foggy mornings, you went in and out of fog as your

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Illustrations by Michael Paraskevas

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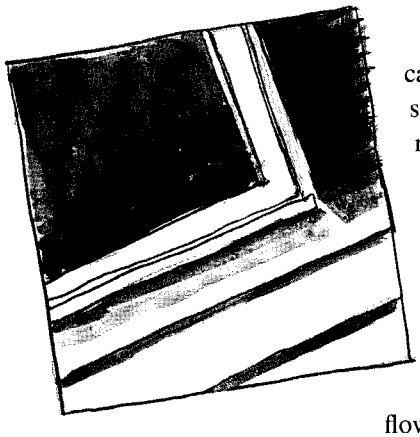

car bounced on its shock absorbers. The water table was near the surface, and many low spots became puddles wriggling with punctuation marks of tadpoles in the spring, or swampy places that eventually linked up to each other and to bankless creeks flowing slowly toward northern Ohio rivers as black and oily as roads.

I used to walk in Hudson at night and feel like every front lawn was my own and every girl was my girlfriend and I could open any door without knocking.

In bad weather the rises and dips writhed under your tires and sometimes slipped away from the car entirely, and your headlights suddenly shone up into the trees, and an enormous possibility opened before you like a tear. My father said you could tell an upcoming dip from the brown patch on the pavement made by drops of oil jiggled loose from cars' oil pans. That was the sort of thing he thought about; he was a research chemist for Standard Oil of Ohio. The Ohio Turnpike cut through the hills and rode on columns above the dips and swampy places. Past the turnpike bridge on the road to our house from town was a dip just right for giving you a funny feeling in the pit of your stomach as you drove over it. Other kids on the school bus and I used to sit in the very back and raise our legs and whoop when we came to it. A neighbor of ours in his fiberglass-bodied Corvette sailed off the road there late one night, and the car threw him into a cornfield unhurt—an escape that annoyed my father when I reminded him of it. He believed strongly in seat belts and always wore his. Before seat belts were required by law, he installed them in both our cars.

Hudson was a village surrounded by farms and second-growth forests. A coal millionaire who had grown up there gave the town money in 1907 on the condition that it agree to certain restorations and improvements, such as burying the electric and telephone wires underground and planting elm trees along the streets. He also specified that the town allow no store to sell liquor stronger than beer (a rule later overlooked) and added a brick clock tower to the town green which stands today. We lived not in the village but two and a half miles from it, in a new housing development in the township. Our address was 7603 Sugarbush Trail. A maple-sugar mill had formerly occupied the site. Kids used to play in the sugar mill and teenagers drank beer there and wrote on the walls; some of them were angry when the developers burned it down. Sugarbush Trail was actually a street of graded dirt paved with slag, in a grid of other streets called Deerpath, Huntington Road, Woodbridge Road, and Pioneer Trail. Alongside the streets ran shallow ditches. Most of the lots were still undeveloped and covered with trees. From Cleveland, before we moved, my mother wrote her mother, "It's a brand new house. . . . Oh, it's going to be beautiful. It's out in the country and up on a knoll." The knoll was a glacial hill, a rise of sand and gravel slightly higher than others in the neighborhood.

My father said we would live there for twenty years, and some of us did. The house, a boxy colonial, had wood siding painted white, green shutters, four bedrooms, two baths upstairs and a half bath downstairs, a two-car garage, a cedar closet, a basement, and a "housewife's planning desk" built into one wall of the kitchen. The sanded and newly varnished hardwood floors made good runways to slide on in stocking feet, but our parents always stopped my brother Dave and my sister Suzan and me from doing that, so we wouldn't wear out our socks. (Fritz was a baby then, and Maggie hadn't been born.) Also, we were supposed to stay out of the back yard, which was full of poison ivy, and not scrape the still-soft latex paint from the walls with our fingernails. Dave and I slept in one bedroom, Sue in another she later shared with Maggie, and Fritz in a bassinet in my parents' room. The bedroom that would be his they kept empty and unheated, with the grates on the furnace vents closed. For a while there was nothing much in that room but my father's sea chest from the Navy, a baby scale, a dismantled bed frame, and a few slow-moving wasps on the floor.

From our back windows we could see no other houses, and no lights at night. Once a hunter came from the woods into our back yard. The trees—elms, maples, ashes, beeches—all stood at about the same height, with the weedy quality of second growth. Whoever had cleared the land had left no big trees, and it still looked like a shaved cat starting to grow back its hair. Agricultural relics—crushed sap buckets, wagon springs, unidentifiable galvanized junk, cow bones—poked here and there from the woods floor. Rusty lengths of barbed wire disappeared slowly into encroaching tree trunks.

THE people who left those relics probably moved away sometime after the Civil War. Since 1800 there have been three big population shifts in America—the frontier movement west, the move from the country to the cities, and the move to the suburbs. My family and almost everyone I knew until I was about twenty-five were part of the third move. We repopulated places that had already been settled once and abandoned. Before 1860 far more Americans lived in rural areas like Hudson township; after, fewer and fewer

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lived on farms and more and more in cities. For a while this shift made some state governments worry that the rural districts would soon be depopulated. In Ohio more than half the state's townships lost population from 1880 to 1890. Hudson and other townships that were farther than ten miles from a city would lose the most.

Cities attracted ambitious young people just as the wilderness had half a century before. New machinery like the self-binding harvester and the adjustable harrow and the grain separator reduced the numbers needed to farm; advances like the understanding of bacterial sources of disease and improved water and sewer systems made cities safer to live in. Cities, too, had better stores and hospitals and schools, and city children went to class more days a year than country children, who took time off for planting and harvesting. In 1800 less than four percent of the population lived in big cities; by 1890, 28 percent did.

A historian of the Disciples of Christ, a frontier church originally, says that the Disciples were not prepared for the rural-to-urban population shift, and lost members as a result. This problem affected many Protestant denominations; their multiplying sects were made for the open country. Protestants emphasized the individual believer and the individual congregation, so their churches had trouble coming up with the larger-scale organization that cities required. Many churches believed in evangelism as a tenet of faith and as a way of getting new members, but the millions of recent immigrants from Europe to the cities were mostly Catholics and Jews, who were hard to evangelize. City Protestants were often from families that had been in America longer and had more money, and the Episcopalian and Presbyterian communions in particular came to be thought of as rich men's churches. Protestants had always defined themselves partly in terms of what they were not—Roman Catholics—but as the nation became more populous and complicated and fast-moving, the list of what they were not expanded. Many said they also weren't liquor drinkers, evolutionists, vaudeville-goers, sabbath-breakers, tobacco users, jewelry wearers, lottery-ticket buyers. They feared the foreign influence in America and said that non-Protestants had no understanding of democracy. Some Protestants took up the new Social Gospel, which preached material as well as spiritual improvement of poor people's lives, but in general the Protestant churches did not encourage trade unionism, racial justice, the feminist movement, or interdenominational unity. The Protestant churches saw the future coming and didn't like it. Their narrowmindedness was a big part of what had driven people from the country to the city in the first place.

The cities' boom years continued until about 1915. People from the countryside—Americans and also immigrants from rural parts of Europe and Russia—came to the cities and stayed a generation or two. Then, in growing numbers, they began to leave. Maybe some of them still remembered farming and wanted to own, if not a farm, a piece of land again. Maybe they had had enough of living in row houses or in buildings with other families, or agreed with the English idea that a cottage surrounded by a yard made the best dwelling for a family. Maybe they hoped never again to see city neighbors of certain racial or religious groups they couldn't stand. Maybe they just weren't city people. Whatever the reason, they moved to the cities' fringes, usually farther along the streetcar or interurban railroad lines, where the expense of commuting kept other people from following. From 1920 to 1930—the beginning of the third big population move—the suburbs of larger cities in America grew twice as fast as the cities' cores.

By the 1920s cars had become cheap enough that most middle-class people could own one, and so could choose houses in the suburbs farther than the standard mile or so from the commuter station. Towns on the frontier often had been built by a single church or sect; suburban towns were usually for just one class, and almost always for just one race. Designers of suburbs encouraged suburban towns to write restrictive ownership covenants saying (for example) that no blacks or Jews could buy. For its loan guarantees the Federal Housing Administration preferred suburban single-family homes in all-white neighborhoods, and it enabled first-time homebuyers to get loans with a 10 percent down payment instead of the 30 percent or more required in the past. Buying a house in the suburbs sometimes was cheaper than renting a city apartment.

The suburban trend paused for the Second World War. After the war, when construction supplies and labor reappeared, it started up again. White people left the cities by the millions, filling places in the Midwest like Bloomfield Hills and Shaker Heights and the various River Oaks and Oak Groves, and the Levittowns of the East, and Westchester County, and Shawnee Mission near Kansas City, and greater Los Angeles, and hundreds of suburbs more. In the development where we lived, nearly every lot was filled by the time I was a teenager. Behind the house, where there had been only trees, we could soon see many lights at night and hear our neighbors' voices when they argued. The smells of my childhood are the smells of cut lumber and wet mud and drying cement, and the sounds are hammering, chain saws, and bulldozers. In the evenings our father would take us kids on a walk to look at the houses that were going up, and we would climb around on them and have sword fights with scantlings and throw mud balls and dig in the piles of sand. Always in some corner of the houses would be a few upended ten-gallon cans of caulking compound the carpenters had sat on while having lunch, and the crumpled wax paper and cigarette packs they'd left behind.

In the countryside around Hudson, development first took the likely sites—the higher ground—and then moved on to the wetter places. Freeway extensions built close to the town made it easier to commute, and in the seventies a real-estate company responsible for the success of several upscale Cleveland suburbs began the largest development project that had yet been tried in Hudson. Hundreds more houses,

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some the size of airplane hangars, went up in the township, and people bought them. Cars filled the narrow roads, one of the few things that had stayed the same; every evening a traffic jam began to grow north and south along Main Street and out of sight. Bulldozers crawled everywhere on the sold farmland. Their tracks led across the bare yards, notched the tar-and-gravel roads, and scored the sandy glacial mud into ingots. The glaciers that had made the landscape were in a sense natural bulldozers, so the environment they left behind proved ideal for mechanical ones. D-4 Caterpillar dozers pushed the rises down into the soggy dips, erased the hilly corrugations, and smoothed the ancient glacial debris like cake batter. Today the bulldozers are fewer and much of the previous landscape is gone, replaced by acres as smooth and green and even as a developer could want.

IN high school and after, my friends and I drove around in cars a lot. On a summer evening I would sit on my front stoop waiting for Jimmy or Kent to come by and pick me up—I was usually passenger, not driver—and then we would pick up some other kids, and ride for hours around Hudson, to neighboring towns, to Cleveland, to the highway sprawl north of Akron, to shopping malls, to dirt roads in the country, to houses of kids whose parents we knew weren't home. One night we put 300 miles on Jimmy's (father's) Cougar. Many people in town recognized us by sight, and sometimes when we waved, an adult would look back at us in the big car not our own with an expression of helpless exasperation. We always listened to the car radio, which we called "listening to tunes." I still use that expression today. We called driving around "cruising": cruising and listening to tunes. Some-

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THE CELLIST

At intermission I find her backstage
still practicing the piece coming up next.
She calls it the "solo in high dreary."
Her bow niggles at the string like a hand
stroking skin it never wanted to touch.
Probably under her scorn she is sick
that she can't do better by it. As I am,
at the dreary in me, such as the disparity
between all the tenderness I've received
and the amount I've given, and the way
I used to shrug off the imbalance
simply as how things are, as if the male
were constituted like those coffeemakers
that produce less black bitter than the quantity
of sweet clear you poured in—forgetting about
how much I spilled through unsteady walking,
and that lot I threw on the ground
in suspicion, and for fear I wasn't worthy,
and all I poured out for reasons I don't understand yet.
"Break a leg!" somebody tells her.
Back in my seat, I can see she is nervous
when she comes out; her hand shakes as she
re-dog-ears the top corners of the big pages
that look about to flop over on their own.
Now she raises the bow—its flat bundle of hair
harvested from the rear ends of horses—like a whetted
scimitar she is about to draw across a throat,
and attacks. In a back alley a cat opens
her pink-ceilinged mouth, gets netted
in full yowl, clubbed, bagged, bicycled off, haggled open,
gutted, the gut squeezed down to its highest pitch,
washed, sliced into cello strings, which bring
an ancient screaming into this duet of hair and gut.
Now she is flying—tossing back the goblets
of Saint-Amour standing empty,
half-empty, or full on the tablecloth-
like sheet music. Her knees tighten
and loosen around the big-hipped creature
wailing and groaning between them
as if in elemental amplexus.
The music seems to rise from the crater left
when heaven was torn up and taken off the earth;
more likely it comes up through her priest's dress,
up from that clump of hair which by now
may be so wet with its waters, like the waters
the fishes multiplied in at Galilee, that
each wick draws a portion all the way out
to its tip and fattens a droplet on the bush
of half notes now glittering in that dark.
At last she lifts off the bow and sits back.
Her face shines with the unselfconsciousness of a cat
screaming at night and the teary radiance of one
who gives everything no matter what has been given.

—GALWAY KINNELL

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times, when the song on the radio was right and the place in the road and the color of the sky and the smell of the cigarette smoke of the girl sitting next to me all came together in a certain way, I would feel an emotion that was a mile wide but that turned out later to be only an inch deep.

Hudson is about an eleven-hour drive from Brooklyn, where I live now. If I leave home in the morning, I get there at dusk or dark. I stop again at Merino's Beer & Wine and talk to Rich or sometimes to his customers. (Charlie, a plumber who has lived in Hudson for years, says, "This used to be a nice town, but the real-estate companies ruined it, puttin' up all these half-million-dollar houses on half acres of property. I don't even drive on Route Ninety-one no more, the traffic's so bad. Used to be, downtown was a hardware store, a clothing store, a feed store, a grocery store. Nowadays, when you go downtown, what're you gonna buy? A house! That's all you *can* buy.") Then I walk across the street to the town green, by the old town hall, where my mother used to direct plays and my family used to act in plays. I stand in the dark and drink beer and watch the traffic jam sort itself out, and I dance around a little bit, and I say, "Baby, I'm going to witch you, I'm going to woo you! Baby, I'm going to kiss you awake!" I used to walk in Hudson at night sometimes and feel like every front lawn was my own front lawn and every grown-up was my father or mother and every girl was my girlfriend and I could sleep on any porch and open any door without knocking. Now I stand in the dark by the traffic jam in the town I no longer know and an emotion comes over me and I say, "Baby, I am your heart!"

After a while I walk to the Reserve Inn and have a good dinner for the price of a cab ride in New York. I get in the car and go to a motel by the turnpike and register. I lie on the bed and watch TV or talk on the phone until the traffic has eased up. By this time it is usually pretty late. Then I go for a drive, to the places we used to, in Hudson and beyond. Like me, most of the people I knew have moved away. Almost no one lives in the same house as when I was a kid. I look at the houses, and I think:

She was in my fifth-grade class, and one winter day I was walking home without any gloves on and she saw me, put on gloves, came out her side door, knocked me down, and washed my face with snow. She grew up to be smart and shy.

He moved to Washington, D.C., and got a job at the Pentagon doing research for a colonel who holds the world's record for sit-ups.

I danced with her at the Episcopal church square dance one night and liked her a lot. Her mother liked me but she didn't. She later became a hippie and went with older guys and got pregnant or something.

She and I and some other kids ran in the smoke and flames when the farmers were burning off their pastures along Middleton Road in early spring, and later we roughhoused and I pinned her to her front lawn under my sooty knees. She inherited a restaurant in Spain.

She was the prettiest girl in town in 1967. She died in a building collapse in New York City.

Taking the SAT tests for college, he got so nervous that he chewed the buttons off both his shirt cuffs. His mother had no hair and wore a wig and penciled on her eyebrows. They moved away.

She wore cutoff blue jeans so short you could see the white ends of the pants pockets underneath. She became a jeweler and married a jeweler.

A friend and I once called him a hood, and he and another guy caught us and slammed us together, knocking me unconscious. He became a first lieutenant in the Marine Corps and died in Vietnam.

He—the kid I was slammed against—married a popular daytime-television star. I follow his family's progress in the soap-opera fan magazines.

She stood by the lockers outside the cafeteria at a high school dance, her hips cocked like a fist.

She wore white knee-high vinyl boots the time we sat on the hood of a car in the parking lot behind the academy football field and watched the northern lights. She moved to New York and became an actor and appeared as a mom in a cough-syrup commercial on TV.

She sat on her front porch on hot afternoons reading, holding her long hair up off the back of her neck with one hand. When we went out together, she decided she didn't like me, because I was such a drip around her friends. She told me, "This is what you do—you stand."

He once hitchhiked from Hudson to Boston barefoot.

She wore blue jeans so tight that the seam had separated at the hip joint on one side. A friend of mine who went with her said that sometimes she made his brain so inflamed he could look up and see his forehead. She works for an advertising company out west somewhere.

She liked horses, and looked kind of like a horse, and we used to whinny at her. She got a fatal illness in her twenties.

Her grandmother was my piano teacher, and her parents had sent her to Hudson to get over her boyfriend. One day I was sitting in the parlor waiting for my piano lesson, and she was upstairs singing "It's in His Kiss" as loud as she could, and the mailman came and went at the front door, and she ran downstairs singing to get the mail, and she was wearing nothing but glasses and bikini underpants, and my piano teacher appeared and screamed, "Renee, there's a boy here!" and Renee stopped and looked right at me for a long moment and I looked at her, and then she turned and went back upstairs.

The stripes on the seat of her bathing suit, like longitude lines on a globe. That tight Mickey Mouse T-shirt.

She and I used to sit on the grass and talk and smoke cigarettes and pick the vein structures from broad-leaved weeds.

One summer at the ice-cream social she slid her bare arm around my bare arm to hold my hand. She married a man named (can this be right?) Bill Shrunk.

I kissed her holding her against the chain-link fence behind

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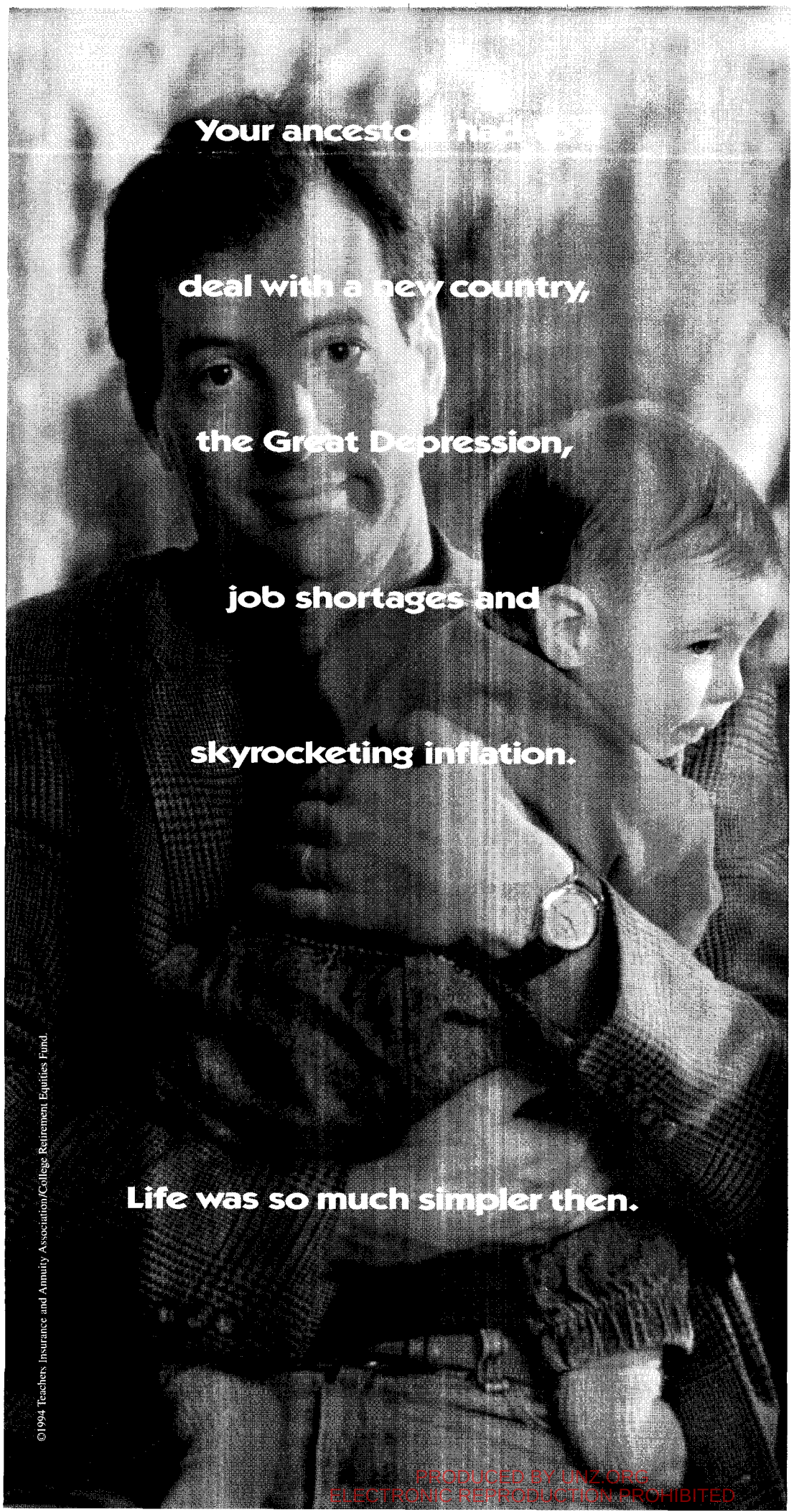

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the elementary school. She became a therapeutic masseuse in New York, with her own portable table and towels.

He was a short, skinny kid, and he always said his ambition was to beat up his dad. In high school he went on a special diet and began to work out, and he grew to the size of a mailbox, and people said that then he actually did beat up his dad.

He teased me and I got two big kids to hold him and I slugged him in the stomach. His teacher came to my classroom and complained, but I was in so good with my teacher that nothing happened. He later became a tour guide in Hawaii.

He was the most talented kid in town. I admired and envied him. He could act, sing, play guitar, draw, play basketball and baseball. He was funny and had straight brown hair he could easily fling back from his face. I remember riding with him in his Mustang and discussing the new TV series *Batman*. He killed himself, people said for love of an older woman he met during a production at the local little theater.

She teased me and another kid for being nerds. She married a man not from Hudson who became obsessed with the town and collected its stories and personalities like baseball cards and now probably knows more about it than anyone.

He and his friends used to hang out on the village green so much that Hudson store owners complained. He founded a successful punk band and changed his name to something like Flash Pop.

She put her tan bare feet with coral-painted toenails on the dashboard and bumped her heels in time to the radio. She got sick from something she sprayed on trees while working for a landscaping company and moved to Atlanta and moved to Buffalo and got married.

He used to say he had drunk so much beer he could piss a pound of foam.

He marked up a friend of mine with a Magic Marker for giving him the finger.

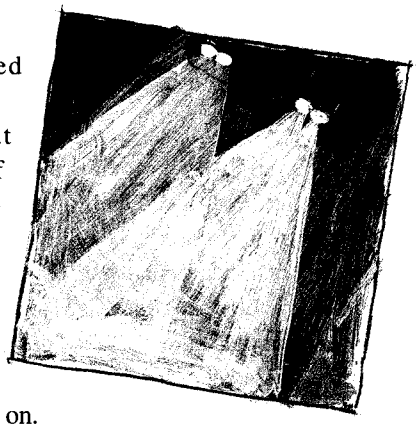
When we were little, we used to make fun of him, basically because his family was poor. The yard of his house was so full of iron junk it appeared to be magnetized. He got into trouble for stealing returnable bottles from a neighbor's garage. Years later I ran into him with his wife and baby in town, and he said he had joined the circus.

To her senior prom she wore a gown made of dyed bedsheets. She became a newscaster in Florida and shot herself to death on live television.

She sat by the hockey pond on a still night and dangled her feet in the water, and a while later the ripples made the streetlight on the opposite side of the pond waver. She pushed me into the pond and thought that was hysterically funny. I thought it was funny too. She moved away.

He used to pick me up when I was hitchhiking, and even though he was almost at his house, he would give me a ride all the way to my house. He became an Episcopal priest.

She was a dental hygienist, and we flirted so much while she was cleaning my teeth that the dentist yelled at us. She married a guy named Steve and divorced him and married another guy named Steve.



When she was about eight years old, she took off all her clothes and tried to slide down a laundry chute and got stuck and called for help and wouldn't let her stepbrother pull her out, because then he'd see her without any clothes on. She married a man who made a lot of money doing computer graphics for TV, and now she does computer graphics too.

The smells of my childhood are the smells of cut lumber and wet mud and drying cement, and the sounds are hammering, chain saws, and bulldozers.

She and I went to a golf course late one night and took off our shoes and ran across the fairway, and the moon was so bright that when we looked back, we could see our footprints far behind us in the dew. She liked me, but I didn't know it, and I liked her, but I didn't know it. I was always saying upsetting and competitive things to her. She went to college and became a museum curator and moved to California and married the son of the discoverer of a polio vaccine.

By this time I am singing along with the radio and rocking back and forth in the seat and hitting the heel of my hand against the steering wheel. Here and there I see the blue glow of a TV through a window; most people in Hudson are in bed. I coast down Oviatt Street and pause in front of 80 North Oviatt. Her locker was near mine in sixth grade, and one day I asked her for her telephone number, and she said she didn't know it, and I said, "You must be pretty dumb not to know your own telephone number." Her family had just moved to town, which was why she didn't. At a dance at the high school in eighth grade I asked her if she would sneak out of her house later and climb the town water tower with me, and she said yes, and I went home and snuck out of my bedroom and walked back to town and threw pebbles at that window, the one above the door to the right, but she didn't wake up, so I climbed the water tower by myself. The summer after tenth grade I saw her at a dance talking to a guy I believed I was cooler than, and I started talking to her, and the guy disappeared, and I walked her to her house, and we talked some more. I started to come around her house in the evenings. My

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dad let me drive his Corvair. Everybody said I would have a girlfriend as soon as I got my driver's license, and they were right. I got my license on July 6, and she and I started going together July 19. That evening I drove by her house and her little brother saw me and ran inside, and then she came out. She had told him to sit out front and watch for me. In the glove compartment I had some cigars that belonged to a friend, and I asked her if she wanted to walk with me to his house to return them. We went via the playing fields and the open fields behind the high school. On our way back I took her hand. She was wearing a kind of loose madras dress with a tear in the side. It was just past sunset. I heard voices and I said, "Is that somebody coming?" We stopped and looked across the fields and she said she didn't think so. I said, "In that case—" and turned and kissed her. Her head turned quickly to me and her hair swung between us and her tongue pushed into my mouth through strands of hair. She pushed her hair back behind her ear and we kissed again. We saw each other every day we could for the rest of the summer. At night we used to say we were going for a walk and then we would lie down in the long grass behind the garage where her father never mowed. We stayed together all the next school year, broke up in the spring, and continued breaking up and getting back together for about nine years. She was engaged to marry someone else in college, returned to town, and got back with me. Finally, after a lot more happened, she married my friend Kent. They had two kids and moved to Boulder, Colorado, and divorced. She lives in Boulder and is a licensed nurse. Her name then was Susie. It became Susan.

I turn right on Aurora Street, heading toward our old house. My father never liked her. Maybe he was afraid I would marry too young and get stuck in Hudson; I know he thought he was stuck in Hudson himself. The speed limit on Aurora Street, from the clock tower all the way to the town line, has been 25 mph for as long as I can remember. My father never drove one mile an hour over the speed limit on this street. He maintained an unvarying twenty-five the whole way, both hands on the steering wheel, both eyes on the road, never a glance at the would-be speeders cooling their heels behind him. It made no difference how late we were for something, how much in a hurry I was. People in town dreaded the sight of his car up ahead when they turned onto Aurora. At night, if one of the streetlights happened to be out, he would slow down while passing underneath it. Naturally, when I began to drive, I drove much faster, and got a speeding ticket on Aurora Street, and wrecked a car he was fond of when I missed a turn and rolled twice and ended up in a ditch by the Little League baseball field. Nobody got hurt (Susie was with me), and he had the car fixed, but it was never the same. The rear suspension was shot. Now I usually don't like to drive fast myself, and I annoy other drivers by poking along. Tonight I drive twenty-five or slower out Aurora.

I continue to Stow Road, and up the hill to Woodbridge Road. The corner of Stow and Woodbridge is where I rolled the car. When I ran home and told my father what I'd done, he went into his room and cried. But once the car had been towed back to our house and he was checking the engine for damage, he cheered right up; he always liked a good technical problem. I turn onto our street and creep up it so slowly that if anybody is watching at this hour, they will wonder what I am doing. Our house looks like a mansion to me now. The driveway is paved—ours was gravel—and the landscaping is more elaborate, with shrubs and plantings and a lawn trimmed at the edges. We never trimmed the lawn. When we first moved in, we didn't even have a lawn. My father thought it would be better to plant rye grass. We had a field of four-foot-high rye in front of our house for a year or more. My father used to cut it with a scythe. Somebody is probably asleep in a bed in my old room. I could just pull into the drive and go through the side door, up the stairs, into my room, into the bed. My father was so glad to move from this house. He took the buyer all over it and cheerfully pointed out everything that didn't work or needed repair. The buyer began fixing the place up before we'd even moved, and he quickly sold it for more than he had paid. My father used to paint the outside of the house every few years; he dug up the septic tank and the leach bed from time to time; he fooled with the driveway and the furnace and the pump and the washing machine. My mother was less sure about moving. She wanted what he wanted.

The truth is, being in Hudson often fills me with anxiety. Feelings rise up, an internal tantrum of them. Sometimes memories cause me one long, unrelieved wince after the next. I remember getting into the car to drive home from the hospital after my brother Fritz died of leukemia. My mother sat in front and we kids in back, our number now permanently reduced by one, and my father, in the driver's seat, took his leather gloves from under the visor and put them on, carefully pulling each finger to. I thought it was remarkable that he could do that after his son had just died. He bought Fritz a plot in Markillie Cemetery, in Hudson, and at the same time bought two plots adjoining it. Why two? Why not six, or none? Maybe he couldn't bear to think of his son there alone without some of us to keep him company. Maybe he knew that the end of Fritz's life meant in some way the end of his, and of my mother's.

Now I am ready to go back to the motel. I choose a route from our old house that leads past the cemetery. I don't look to the right or left; I am fast-forwarding through Hudson. A song that I like comes on the radio, and I turn it up so loud that the sound vibrates the dash and distorts in my ears and fits around me like armor. I am roaring and hollering, on general principles, but I can hardly hear myself. I come down Route 91, streetlights flickering through the windshield, and the cemetery approaches on the right. The gates are locked. People have built houses all around the grounds, and backyard decks now overlook the graves. As I drive by, I shout out to my parents and my brother.

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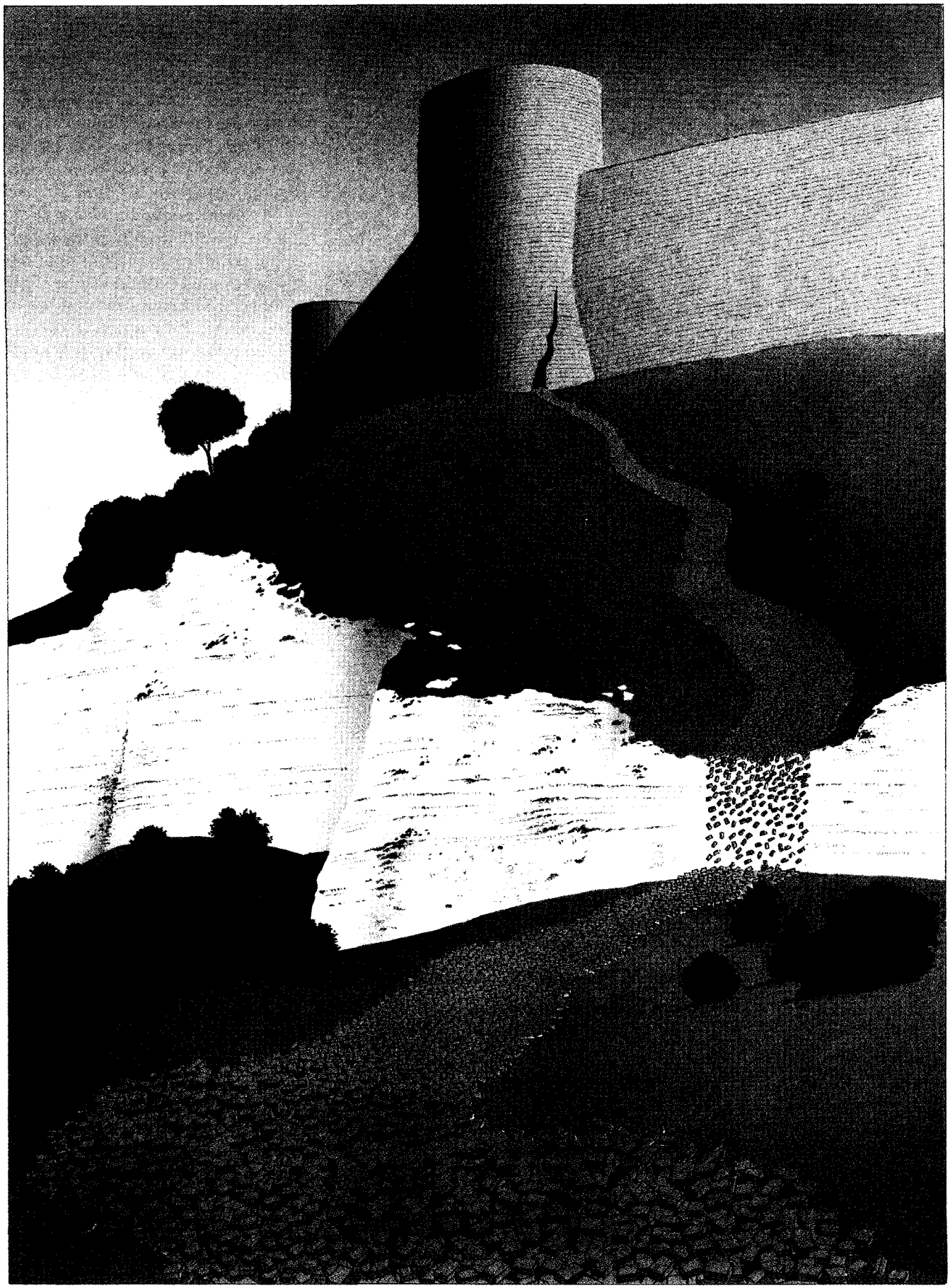
BREACH *by Guy Billout*



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His Own Jukebox

Elvis Presley's career, beginning and end, depended on his extraordinary gifts as a mimic

by Francis Davis

IN Peter Guralnick's new book, *Last Train to Memphis*, the first half of what will be a two-volume biography, we read that as a teenager, Elvis Presley used to sing along with the groups at the all-night gospel meets he would take a girlfriend to hear. This embarrassed Presley's girlfriend, particularly his habit of "trying to hit the low notes with the bass singer [and] the high ones with the lead tenor," though we can guess that she also found this irrepressible urge of his rather endearing. Even if this is just one detail in a book that vibrates with them, it caught my eye, because it reminded me of a similar moment on what has become my favorite Presley recording—one Presley himself probably never heard.

I found a copy of the recording in a Boston record shop in 1984, seven years after Presley's death. Then available only as a bootleg, it has since been released through legitimate channels, most recently on compact disc as *The Million Dollar Quartet* (RCA 2023-2-R). It was recorded on the sly by Sam Phillips, of Sun Records, in his fabled studio on Union Avenue in Memphis, on December 4, 1956, during what was supposed to have been a session by Carl Perkins, a rockabilly singer and guitarist whose version of "Blue Suede Shoes," a song he had written, had preceded Presley's up the charts earlier that year. As luck would have it, Jerry Lee Lewis was also at Sun that afternoon, sitting in with Perkins's band on piano. Johnny Cash, yet another of Phillips's contract artists, showed up just long enough to pose with Perkins, Lewis, and Presley, who had dropped by ostensibly to say hello, for a picture that ran in the following day's Memphis *Press-Scimitar*, above a paragraph describing a jam session by this "million dollar quartet." In truth, all that made the gathering newsworthy was Presley's part in it. The most Icarus-like of Phillips's discoveries wound up instigating an old-fashioned singalong. And Phillips, though he had sold Presley's contract to RCA Victor a year earlier and could no longer release new material by him, had the foresight to order an engineer to roll the tapes, strictly for posterity.

THE music begins with a gospel medley, on which Lewis's boogie-woogie piano and the hepcat yowls during Perkins's guitar solos sound only slightly incongruous. Denounced as heathens by that era's guardians of public morality, Presley and other early southern rockers tended to view themselves as God-fearing men—one of the contradictions that made early rock-and-roll so fascinating. At one point Elvis launches into a version of Ernest Tubb's country gospel tune "I'm With a Crowd, But So Alone," and his hillbilly whine draws a groan from one of the other musicians. This reaction is affectionate and a little nervous,

Illustrations by Hiro Kimura

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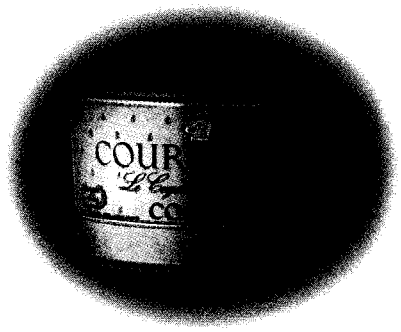
WHAT MAKES A MOMENT

A MEMORY



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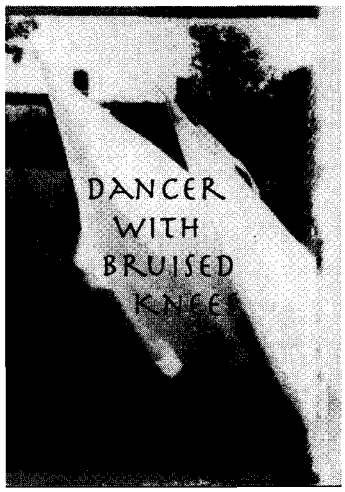

Praise for
DANCER WITH BRUISED KNEES

by Lynne McFall

"Lynne McFall's heroines have a courageous autonomy that is quite irresistible...."
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"This dark and viciously funny novel....is a tough, vital, remarkable work. With taut, eloquent language and heart-stopping honesty, Lynne McFall creates a vision of the world that will make readers squirm and clutch at their chairs."
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not derisive. The music is the sort these young men grew up with, and you can tell that this is what the others suspect they must sound like to northerners.

Presley goes on to sing spirited versions of tunes made popular by Pat Boone, Chuck Berry, Hank Snow, Faron Young, and the Ink Spots, among others. All these are great fun, no matter how off-key both the instrumental backing and the vocal harmonies tend to be. But the moment I treasure comes about thirty minutes in, when Presley tells the others about an unnamed singer he heard in Las Vegas, who did "a thing on me" on "Don't Be Cruel." Noting in passing that the singer was "a colored guy" and praising his interpretation of the song as "much better than that record of mine," Presley remarks that "he had it a little slower than me" —and then proceeds to demonstrate. Prefacing each chorus with an explanatory "he said," he halves the tempo and gives the song a big finish, as Jerry Lee Lewis gamely pumps away behind him.

But this "Don't Be Cruel" doesn't end there. For the next few minutes Presley keeps breaking into the song every time there's a lull. He gets laughs with his imitation of the black "Yankee" singer's attempt to give the words of the song what the singer must have thought was a genuine southern pronunciation ("*telly*phone!" Perkins—or someone—shouts in amused disbelief). He describes how the singer grabbed the microphone on the last note and slid all the way down to the floor, how on certain lines he shook his head back and forth admonishingly, and how he had his feet turned in "and all the time he's singin', them feet was goin' in and out both ways, slidin' like this." Through all of this you just know that he's illustrating the story by swooping to the floor himself, shaking his own head, and swiveling his own feet.

The unidentified singer who so enthralled Presley (and whom he sounded nothing like) was Jackie Wilson, soon to have hits himself. A month later, as if to prove that imitation really is the sincerest form of flattery, Presley concluded one segment of an appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* with a rendition of "Don't Be Cruel" that, Guralnick tells us, owed everything to Wilson's, "from finger rolls to his pronunciation of 'tellyphone' to the big pumped-up ending."

"It seemed like he had a photographic memory for every damn song he ever heard," Phillips told Guralnick. The venerable music critic Henry Pleasants once characterized Presley as a "naturally assimilative" stylist with a "multiplicity of voices"—that is, a gifted singer with an instinct for mimicry, whose music incorporated gospel, country, rhythm and blues, operatic airs, vaudeville recitation, and sticky early-fifties pop of the sort that rock-and-roll ultimately savaged.

Pop music as it has evolved alongside audio technology has resulted in what I think of as aural culture—similar to but finally distinct from the oral traditions on which folk music once depended. Aural culture takes the form of teenagers' uninhibitedly singing along with records (if only in the privacy of their bedrooms) and imitating the sounds on them. Rock-and-roll has been aural culture from the beginning, and the Elvis captured that afternoon at Sun—already famous, already in movies, perched at No. 1 on the pop charts for the fourth time that year, but still only twenty-one—sounds like a kid emulating the vocal mannerisms of his favorite singers, less for the delectation of anyone who might be listening than for the thrill it gives *him* to hear those familiar voices vibrating in his own throat. He's his own jukebox.

Although he emulated other singers' styles, Presley was no impersonator. His own personality emerged whether he was singing country, rhythm and blues, or pop. The key to his originality may have been his enthusiasm for so many different kinds of music and his refusal to distinguish among them.

At the time of the Sun session Presley's star was still on the rise, but the world was already beginning to close in on him. Earlier that year he had made his Las Vegas debut, on a bill with the comedian Shecky Greene and the dance-band leader Freddy Martin. This unlikely booking had been arranged by Tom Parker, the former carny hustler and honorary Louisiana colonel who had become his manager and who was determined to expose him to adult audiences. Most adults at that time didn't know what to make of Presley, except to wish he would go away. The engagement had been a fiasco, with *Newsweek* crowing that Presley was as out of

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place in Las Vegas as "a jug of corn liquor at a champagne party." In the stunned silence that greeted Presley's first number on opening night, the guitarist Scotty Moore and the bassist Bill Black realized that this was the first time in months that they were able to hear what they were playing behind him. To their horror, they were badly out of tune.

Presley had reached a point where he was being upstaged by his screaming female fans. In Memphis, his home town, it was becoming virtually impossible for him even to leave the house without causing a near-riot. There had been teenage idols before—notably Frank Sinatra, little more than ten years earlier. What made the Presley phenomenon different was the specter of juvenile delinquency. He was being denounced in the editorial pages and from the pulpit for fostering it with his voice, his sideburns, and his hips. His ascent had been so swift that it must have seemed like a dream to him, in danger of ending at any moment. In a way, he was a creature of the recording studio. Before he cut his first commercial recording, in the Sun studio in the summer of 1954, he had performed in public only a few times —for instance, Red Foley's "Old Shep" at a Mississippi state fair when he was ten, and Teresa Brewer's "Till I Waltz Again With You" at his high school talent show. Returning to Sun must have been like returning to the womb. This would be the last time he would sing there, and he would never again sound so unguarded.

The reaction of Presley's fellow musicians to his performance is amusing. They go along with him at first, but after a while you can almost hear them wondering why he's making such a fuss. They're a little bit like that girlfriend, though not so much embarrassed for him as puzzled.

THE Presley phenomenon continues to puzzle most of us, which may be why Presley is the subject of so much literature. Books have been published about his relationship with his mother, his Army years, his mostly dreadful movies, the final days of his life, kitsch collectibles bearing his image, and posthumous sightings of him. The books published about him in the past year or so have included one containing his favorite recipes and one about his acts of philanthropy. Before Guralnick's there was only one cradle-to-grave biography that I know

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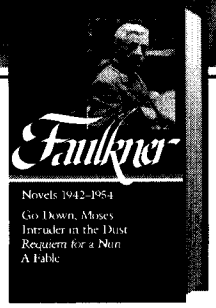
JOHN STEINBECK
Novels and Stories 1932-1937
The Pastures of Heaven, To a God Unknown, Tortilla Flat, In Dubious Battle, Of Mice and Men



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Rules: Only one entry per person allowed. No purchase necessary. No entries can be returned. All decisions are final. *The Atlantic* is not responsible for late or lost mail. Contest open to residents of the U.S. and Canada, 18 years or older, except employees of *The Atlantic* and their immediate families. Winners will be notified by mail. Contest void where prohibited and subject to all state, federal, and local laws and regulations.

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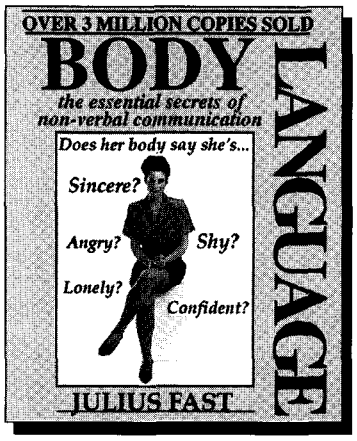

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of: an attempted harpooning by the late Albert Goldman, who went after the latter-day jump-suited pharmaceutical mutant of Graceland as vengefully as Ahab pursued his great white whale.

Nearly 500 pages, *Last Train to Memphis* ends with Presley's transport to Germany as a private first class in September of 1958, a month after the death of his mother, Gladys, whom he adored and the loss of whom took some of the life out of him and his already rather passive father, Vernon. Guralnick's edge over his competition isn't simply a matter of his book's greater thoroughness. His previous books, which have included a history of soul music, a meditation on the life of Robert Johnson, and two collections of sensitive profiles of musicians, have won him such credibility that his was assumed to be the definitive Elvis biography the moment it was announced. Guralnick's sources, I think, sensed that this was going to be the last word on Elvis Presley, and opened themselves up accordingly.

This first volume isn't the sort of book commonly referred to as a "critical" biography. Despite a wealth of information about Presley's stage shows and recording sessions, and about the role played by Memphis disc jockeys in exposing white youths of Presley's generation to black rhythm and blues, there isn't a great deal of musical analysis here. But *Last Train to Memphis* is clearly the work of someone who spent much of his adolescence looking for himself in the records he heard on the radio, just as Presley did. This empathy Guralnick feels for his subject permits him to use his research as a springboard.

"He likes the company of women, he loves to be around women, women of all ages," Guralnick writes about Presley at the age of fifteen or sixteen, in an extended passage that conveys something of the book's texture and vibrato.

> His aunt Lillian notices it: "He'd get out there at night with the girls and he just sang his head off. He was different with the girls—I'm embarrassed to tell, but he'd rather have a whole bunch of girls around him than the boys—he didn't care a thing about the boys." The women seem to sense something coming out of him, something he himself may not even know he possesses: it is an aching kind of vulnerability, an unspecified yearning; when Sam Phillips meets him just two or three years later, in 1953, he senses much the same quality but calls it insecurity. "He tried not to show it, but he felt so *inferior*. He reminded me of a black man in that way; his insecurity was so *markedly* like that of a black person." Bathed in the soft glow of the streetlight, he appears almost handsome—the acne that embarrasses him doesn't show up so badly, and the adolescent features, which can appear coarse in the cold light of day, take on a kind of delicacy that is almost beautiful. He sings Eddy Arnold's "Molly Darling," Kay Starr's "Harbor Lights," Bing and Gary Crosby's "Moonlight Bay," . . . in a soft, slightly quavering voice, and then, satisfied, takes his comb out of his back pocket and runs it through his hair in a practiced gesture clearly at odds with his hesitancy of manner.

All Guralnick's major themes are woven together here: Presley's ability to mimic whomever he heard on the radio, the hint of mother love and the role his own girlishness played in his attraction and appeal to women, his insecurity as a result of having grown up dirt poor (the Memphis housing project he lived in as a teenager was a step up for the Presleys, who are described by a former neighbor in Mississippi as a family who moved whenever their rent was due), the "blackness" that his first record producer and others sensed in him, and the extent to which the Elvis Presley who exploded on America in 1956 was a teenage misfit's successful attempt to reinvent himself as the most popular boy in class.

Professional musicians sometimes like to give the impression that theirs is the best job of all in that they're being paid to do what they would be doing just for fun. Stardom is frequently a variation on that theme. But to Presley's way of thinking, becoming a star was the only alternative to the role of total nonentity to which his family's low social standing and his own shyness might otherwise have doomed him. ("If you picture him," Guralnick advises us early on, "picture someone you might have missed: a wide-eyed, silent child scuffling his feet, wearing overalls.") This is someone who acquired what must have looked like a stage wardrobe long before setting foot on an actual stage. Though various classmates remember him as a "loner," "a sad, shy, not especially attractive boy," some

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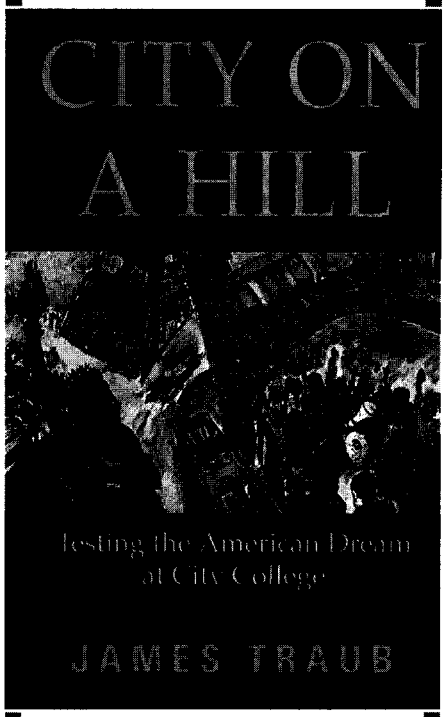
"THE CRISIS CONTINUES

—and as goes New York's city on a hill, so goes the nation."*



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ADDISON-WESLEY

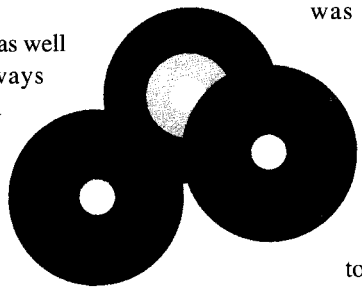
also remember him as something of a peacock, who would show up for classes at Humes High School in bolero jackets and dress pants with stripes down the sides that made him look like a carhop (not the effect he intended). Guralnick notes that when Presley started making movies, he eschewed acting lessons, because "I want to be me." But in being just Elvis Presley he was already in character.

PRESLEY bought the wild duds that Guralnick identifies as one of the first manifestations of "his determination to be himself—his determination to be a *different* self" from a clothing store on Beale Street, Memphis's black hub. Presley's debt to black culture is another of the book's recurring themes, as well it should be—it's the aspect of Presley that is still the most controversial.

"Elvis was a hero to most, but he never meant shit to me," Chuck D, the lead singer and ideologue of the rap group Public Enemy, ranted on the group's 1989 song "Fight the Power," which was featured in Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing*. Some people are always going to assume that because Presley was a white southerner who rose to fame around the time of the Montgomery bus boycott and the murder of Emmett Till, he was "a straight-up racist . . . simple and plain," as Chuck D put it. Some African-Americans are still convinced that Presley once said, "The only thing Negroes can do for me is buy my records and shine my shoes"—a rumor of the late 1950s which Guralnick convincingly demonstrates had no basis in fact.

To some people, white as well as black, Presley is always going to be a sideburned parasite, a white boy who made a bundle by singing and shaking his hips like a black man and never acknowledged his source. In fact he was forthcoming about the black influences on him. "The colored folks been singing it and playing it just like I'm doin' now, man, for more years than I know," he told an interviewer in 1956. Guralnick cites this and several other interviews in which Presley uttered similar sentiments. Besides, the young Presley listened to, enjoyed, and copied all manner of performers. Among the early influences on him were a white gospel quartet called the Statesmen, whose members included Jake Hess, an emotive lead tenor described by Guralnick as "a spectacular singer with the kind of soaring tenor and controlled vibrato that Elvis would explicitly aspire to," and Jim Wetherington, a bass singer nicknamed the Big Chief, who stirred up church audiences with his onstage shaking, which some fundamentalist ministers denounced as lewd.

Presley's early muses were radio and records, and much of his exposure to black music came through them. In that way he was no different from many white youths of his day, regardless of where they happened to live. But as a southerner during a time when, despite legal segregation, there was probably more daily contact between the races in Mississippi than anywhere in the North, Presley enjoyed firsthand exposure to black life. Just after the Second World War his family lived for a brief time in Tupelo practically across the street from Shake Rag, the city's most densely populated black neighborhood. Within earshot of what Guralnick describes as the quarter's "tumultuous bursts of song," Elvis was perhaps also drawn to Shake Rag's "sharp flashes of emotion, the bright splashes of color, the feelings so boldly on display." By the time he entered the seventh grade, the Presleys were living in an apartment not near but actually in Tupelo's more "respectable" black neighborhood, albeit in a house understood to be reserved for whites—a distinction that, as Guralnick points out, was perfectly clear to Vernon and Gladys Presley but was probably lost on their twelve-year-old son, who may have recognized something of his own family's values in those of the neighborhood's black strivers.



Blackness does seem to have rubbed off on Elvis Presley, who sang rhythm and blues as unselfconsciously as he sang country music. His first Sun release, in 1954, a version of Arthur Crudup's 1947 blues hit "That's All Right" backed with Bill Monroe's "Blue Moon of Kentucky," was about as perfect an expression as you could hope to find of the unexamined racial double consciousness of a white southerner of his time and social station. This was just one of the curious dualities he embodied. Pres-

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ley was a studied natural, a well-mannered mama's boy who became a role model for a generation of rebellious youth, a kid who could hit both the high notes and the low ones, a biographical subject whose life almost demands to be examined in two parts. *Last Train to Memphis* is subtitled "The Rise of Elvis Presley," as if to confirm that volume two will be about the descent—about how the stardom Presley wished on himself ultimately made him captive, increasing his sense of otherness and cutting him off from his original sources of inspiration. Even with the sympathetic Guralnick telling the story, it promises to make for grim reading.

ELVIS Presley is one of the reasons that megastardom of the sort he virtually defined is increasingly equated with loneliness, isolation, mental and physical rot—tragedy waiting to happen. Stardom of such magnitude also invites the fantasy that the performer in question might have been happier doing something else with his life, or doing the same thing on a smaller, more life-size scale. Frank Sinatra now usually sings with orchestras in massive sports arenas that make a joke of the implied intimacy with each of his listeners on which his phrasing has always depended, and which is now about all he has left as a singer. Sinatra should be performing with just a rhythm section in tiny cabarets. But he can't, because he's Frank Sinatra, not Bobby Short or even Tony Bennett.

The only time I saw Presley live, in 1971, he was essentially imitating Tom Jones, a crude caricature of Presley to begin with and a far cry from Jackie Wilson. I guess he'd caught Jones's act in Vegas and felt both flattered and challenged. It could have been worse. I had the feeling that for years the only music Presley had listened to closely had been "demos" of tunes written in the hope that he would record them, performed in rough fashion by their composers or by anonymous singers chosen for their ability to emulate him. No wonder he became such a self-parody. Maybe he missed his calling. Given his ability to sing practically anything, he might have been the greatest demo singer who ever lived, a record-industry cult figure, a sane and healthy man. But then he wouldn't have been Elvis Presley—at least not in the way his name will forever imply.

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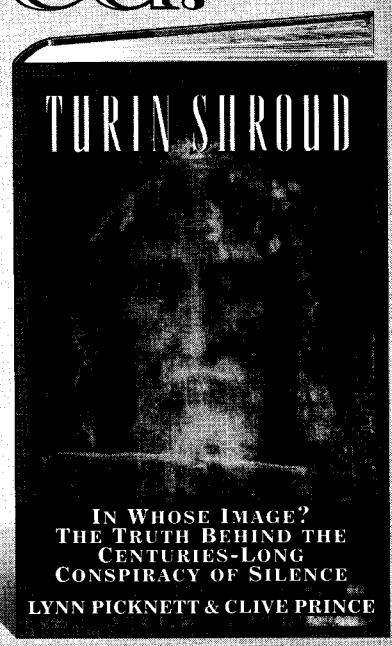

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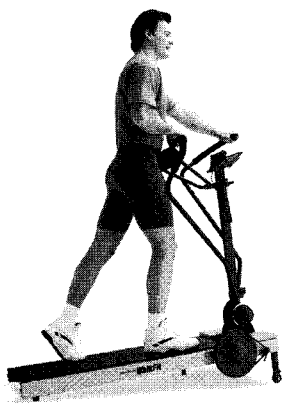

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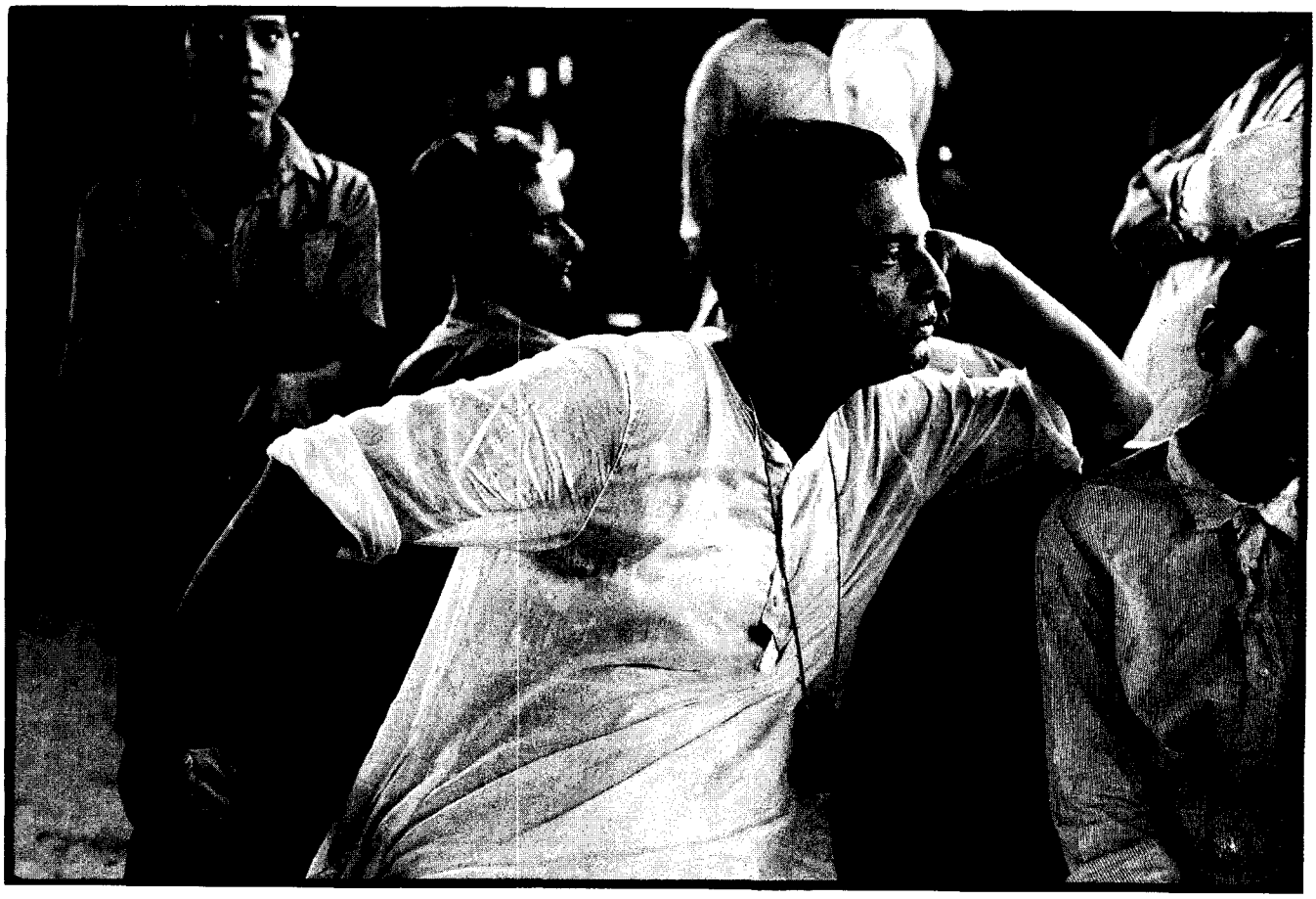

MARC RIBOUD

An Art Wedded to Truth

Satyajit Ray, the Indian Chekhov, typically earned $3,300 for writing, producing, directing, and composing the score for one of his limpid, masterly feature films

by Michael Sragow

SATYAJIT Ray was the most sublimely relaxed and embracing moviemaker to emerge since Jean Renoir and Vittorio de Sica—and, unlike those two maestros, he did great or near-great work throughout his career. In Ray's twenty-nine features dramatic epiphanies sprout organically from the material when characters aren't looking and audiences are least expecting them. Ray's movies don't usually leave audiences purged by pity and terror; they leave them either sadder but wiser or gladder but wiser. After watching a masterwork like *Aparajito* (1956), the middle chapter of the tumultuously moving Apu trilogy, in which the young hero leaves his mother behind in the countryside to study in Calcutta, viewers sense that Ray's rivers of feeling have enriched their own emotional sediment. One doesn't have to be the heir of a Hindu priest or a widow's only surviving child to perceive the momentousness of Apu's move. And one doesn't have to be a Bengali learning British academic discourse to experience Apu's subsequent mixture of estrangement and elation. No other movie, from any nation or in any language, has so keenly captured the inevitable alienation that comes from shuttling between a traditional home and college.

As Ray proved in his essays on movies —collected in an eloquent and far-ranging 1976 anthology, *Our Films, Their Films* (just published for the first time in North America, by Hyperion)—he had a capacious, catholic critical appetite. He was one of the last frankly humanistic movie masters. Although he felt out of synch with post-sixties permissiveness, he loved the way the innovations of the French New Wave and the British Free Cinema expressed fluctuating social values. He also acknowledged instances in

***Above, Ray directing* Aparajito**

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which pure formal genius provoked delight. He wrote,

> In Hitchcock at his best, the basic idea is not crushed, but transcended by the technique which becomes something to be admired for its own sake. This has happened in the cinema again and again, in Westerns, in thrillers, in slapstick comedies, in musicals.

Ray had faith that "art wedded to truth must in the end have its reward."

His craft alone was considerable. In addition to screenwriting, producing, and directing, he composed the scores for all his movies after *Three Daughters* (1961), designed the calligraphy for the opening credits, and, after *Charulata* (1964), operated the camera.

Ray told an interviewer, "I am forced by circumstances to keep my stories on an innocuous level. What I can do, however, is pack my films with meaning and psychological inflections and shades, and make a whole which will communicate a lot of things to many people." He conceived this whole as a stream of imagery and movement. When Apu returns from school in *Aparajito* and realizes, in a rush, that his mother has died, the camera follows him as he approaches the village courtyard, and then it glides along outside as Apu dashes inside and emerges from an opening in the wall; the design and choreography of the scene provide the visual equivalent of Apu's racing, skipping heartbeat. As Apu comes to a halt and sees the still, stoic figure of his granduncle, the history of his family reaches its tragic pinnacle.

In the four decades since Ray's debut as a writer-director—with the first Apu movie, *Pather Panchali* (1955)—his influence has been felt both in the type of work other directors attempt and in the means they employ to execute it. The youthful coming-of-age dramas that have flooded art houses since the mid-fifties owe a tremendous debt to the Apu trilogy, which Terrence Rafferty has rightly called "cinema's purest *Bildungsroman*." (In baggy-pants homage to Ray, American TV's cartoon-burlesque *Bildungsroman*, *The Simpsons*—which could be called "The Education of Bart Simpson"—contains an Indian convenience-store owner named Apu.)

In 1967 Ray wrote an *E.T.*-like fantasy called *The Alien*. After Steven Spielberg's lyrical flight of fancy appeared, in 1982,

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How the Boycott works. The boycott works on several levels. The *primary boycott* prohibits Arab people and Arab states to do any business—with and in Israel. The *secondary boycott* attempts to prevent businesses anywhere in the world from any economic activity with Israel and threatening them with economic retaliation if they do not conform. It is a very potent weapon, since most countries and most businesses are well aware that the large Arab market and its enormous oil wealth make it most unattractive to get into the bad graces of the Arabs. Little consideration is given to the fact that the boycott is a gross violation of international law. The U.S. is the one shining exception to the almost universal acceptance of this economic blackmail. There is also the *tertiary boycott* that punishes firms that deal with blacklisted businesses. And perhaps the most damaging aspect is the so-called *"voluntary boycott"*, by which companies, and in some cases entire countries, refrain pre-emptively from doing business with Israel in order to avoid retaliation by the Arabs.

The boycott also applies to international shipping, aviation and tourism: Most ships and airplanes calling on Israel are barred from Arab ports; airplanes enroute to and from Israel cannot overfly Arab countries. Israelis or any travelers with Israeli visas in their passports may not enter most Arab countries.

The Arab Boycott Office maintains a blacklist, which at last count included over 6,300 entries in 96 countries. In the United States alone, over 12,000 firms each year receive requests from Arab firms for boycott compliance. In Europe and Asia, where, in contrast to the United States, boycott compliance is usually legal, the numbers are probably much higher.

> "The Arab boycott is undisguised economic warfare against the state of Israel. It is totally unrelated to any territorial dispute the Arabs may have with Israel."

The Cost of the Boycott to Israel. The primary damage of the boycott to the Israeli economy is that it prevents or considerably hampers investments in the country. That loss is estimated to be on the order of $500 to $600 million per year. The loss of potential trade with the Arab countries alone is on the order of over $500 million per year. Because of the boycott, Israel's commercial exports are at least 10% less than they would otherwise be—a loss of about $1.2 billion per year!

The Arab boycott is undisguised economic warfare against Israel. The boycott is totally *unrelated to any territorial dispute the Arabs may have with Israel, since the boycott* started over twenty years before any such territories came under Israeli administration. Its purpose is the strangulation of Israel—to achieve by economic means what the Arabs, despite many tries, have been unable to achieve by military means. But the greatest losers of the boycott may well be the Arabs themselves. Blinded by their hatred of Israel they have prevented the Middle East from becoming an area of growth and prosperity exceeding even the Asian Pacific Rim countries. Rescinding the almost 50-year old boycott would be an encouraging signal to the world and to the Israeli public. Their not bringing even such a gesture does give a clue that the intentions of the Arabs are not peaceful and that Israel is justified in proceeding with greatest caution in any peace negotiations.

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Ray told the Indian press that *E.T.* "would not have been possible without my script of *The Alien* being available throughout America in mimeographed copies." Spielberg retorted, "I was a kid in high school when his script was circulating in Hollywood." Still, the best scenes in *E.T.*, such as the one of the boy hero showing the creature his *Star Wars* figurines, have the patience and controlled excitement of *Pather Panchali.* I take this not as a sign of imitation but as a testament to how Ray kept alive the Renoir–De Sica tradition of luminous observation. His methods of charging enclosed and wide-open spaces with feeling have entered the movie vocabulary of the world. Spielberg might not have seen *Pather Panchali* (or read *The Alien*), but he had seen Truffaut's *The 400 Blows*, which won Truffaut a best-director award at Cannes four years after Ray's movie won a prize there for "best human document." Reviewing Ray's canon, I was struck by how he tied his camera movements to his characters' psychology, just as Martin Scorsese (who acknowledges a debt to Ray) does, more showily, today. Ray gave meaning and poignance to the steady accumulation of details that in life, as in art, we're apt to pass by. He made art out of the overlooked.

Sadly, in his later years Ray himself was overlooked. Even his most famous films, like *Pather Panchali* and *Devi* (1960), fell into obscurity. Before Ray died, on April 23, 1992, he gained renewed recognition from the West and from his own country, including a special Academy Award and the Jewel of India. But as the critic and documentarian Richard Schickel prepared a celebratory montage of Ray's work for the 1992 Oscars show, he discovered that time and neglect had ravaged the Ray legacy. Dilip K. Basu, a professor of history at the University of California at Santa Cruz, who had helped arrange for Ray to prerecord his Academy Award acceptance speech in Calcutta, proposed that the Academy investigate the physical deterioration of his movies. David H. Shepard, an expert on film preservation and a member of the Academy's Scholarship and Grants Committee, spent three weeks in India in the winter of 1992–1993 examining fifteen Ray films and gathering information on the others. His report contained a warning: "It would be hard to think of another world class film artist whose *oeuvre* hangs by such a thin thread."

According to Shepard, the zealot of the Ray preservation movement is Basu, the founder and director of the Satyajit Ray Film and Study Collection (Ray FASC) at UC Santa Cruz. In coordination with the Society for the Preservation of Satyajit Ray Films in India, Basu has raised enough money to take steps toward rebuilding the Ray canon in its entirety and having negatives stored in Calcutta for eventual use in the creation of a complete Ray archive in the United States. The kickoff exhibition of Ray FASC, at the Santa Cruz campus in May, showed off Ray's many facets with a shelf of his diverse genre novels (he designed the covers himself); production sketchbooks and notebooks that displayed Ray's skills at drawing and calligraphy; a huge promotional ad that he devised for his 1977 parable of imperialism, *The Chess Players* ("Marching Towards Completion," it reads, under vistas of an army on the move); and a scheduling chart Ray made for *The Golden Fortress* (1974), which is as intricate and decorative as a Renaissance calendar. All in all, a tribute fit for a Renaissance man.

Elaborate costume designs from Ray's notebook

RAY FILM AND STUDY COLLECTION

The other leading Ray preservationist is Ismail Merchant, the producer who, with the director James Ivory, is responsible for such art-house smashes as *Howards End* and *A Room With a View*, and who is himself an occasional director (his first feature is *In Custody*). Merchant has made the revival of Ray's work a priority of The Merchant and Ivory Foundation. He owns the North American distribution rights to nine Ray titles and hopes to acquire the same rights to the rest of them; he has also catalyzed an unprecedented restoration effort by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' Film Archive and its director, Michael Friend. This fall Sony Pictures Classics will begin to distribute the films in theaters and on video. The AMPAS Film Archive will preserve the reconditioned negatives and make prints available to other archival facilities.

Not even the combined clout of Merchant and the Academy can protect films from acts of God: a fire at the Henderson Film Laboratories, in London, on July 4 of last year destroyed the original negatives of six Ray classics licensed to Merchant: *Pather Panchali, Aparajito, The World of Apu* (1959), *The Music Room* (1958), *Devi,* and *Three Daughters*. Friend says that the bad shape the negatives were in *before* the blaze mitigated the tragedy—he was planning to use alternative sources anyway. In his view, the loss underscores the need to gather backup materials and store them at separate locations.

In Basu's view, the task is too urgent to be left to a commercial producer, even one who collaborates with a dedicated archivist. It's natural for Basu to want the reconstruction of Ray's movies freed from any commercial taint. The struggle between idealism and commercialism is one of Ray's crucial themes. Ray's output testifies to the glories a gifted filmmaker can achieve outside the mainstream of film production. Even in India, Ray has appealed mostly to a fervid minority, because he worked in Bengali, a regional language. Shepard's report states that Ray's budgets ranged from $15,000 to $60,000 and that he typically received $3,300 for the combined work of writing, producing, directing, and composing.

Merchant and Ivory have their own connections to Ray, who supervised the music for Ivory's debut as a feature director, *The Householder* (1963), recut the movie in three days, and also scored Ivory's *Shakespeare Wallah* (1965).

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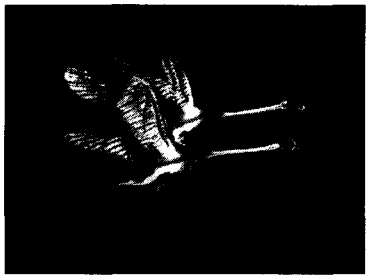

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Thanks to Merchant, Ray's art will soon become available to moviegoers in vastly improved prints—a contribution that can't be overpraised. The Ray films currently in video stores, on poor-to-middling high-contrast prints or on dimming rental copies of good prints, are the Apu trilogy (*Pather Panchali, Aparajito*, and *The World of Apu*), *Devi, Two Daughters, Days and Nights in the Forest* (1969), *The Adversary* (1970), *Distant Thunder* (1973), and *The Home and the World* (1984)—the last Ray film to enjoy a broad American release. (Specialty rental stores with large foreign collections carry better tapes, imported from Great Britain, of the Apu trilogy and of Ray's botched 1989 translation of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*.) Of these, only Embassy Home Entertainment's tapes of *Two Daughters* and *The Home and the World* (now out of print) preserve the iridescent textures that suffused the original movies. The subtitles are often unreadable and the backgrounds undiscernible in *Pather Panchali* and *Aparajito*—you have to put your VCR on pause and refer to Shampa Banerjee's excellent English translation of the screenplay, put out by Seagull Books of Calcutta in 1985 (currently hard to find; try used-book stores). *Distant Thunder* is a movie that *lives* in its color. As Ray once said, the crux of this Second World War tale set in a remote Bengali village is "that nature was very lush, that everything was physically beautiful, and, yet, people were dying of hunger." The incongruity is lost in the current video, which has faded into black, white, and tinges of dull, dull red.

The first four Rays scheduled for restoration include *Mahanagar* (1963), a slender, appealing portrait of a modern urban wife, and *Devi*, which Pauline Kael called "one of the rare, honest films about decadence." The group's anchor (if not its crown) is the director's favorite, *Charulata*. Based on a story by Rabindranath Tagore and set in Bengal in the 1870s, it's a pellucid romantic-triangle movie about the bored, lonely wife of a liberal newspaper editor and her inchoate longing for the man's younger cousin (according to Bengali custom, he's considered the wife's brother-in-law). The scenes of the wife, Charu (Madhabi Mukherjee), and the cousin, Amal (Soumitra Chatterjee), sublimating their passion through literature have an unusual comic-romantic charm. The character of the husband, Bhupati (Sailen Mukherjee), who is so wedded to work and politics that he's slow to notice his wife's ennui, leads the audience to tantalizing insights. *Charulata* recognizes the paradox that reformers are removed from the people for whom they toil. But the movie itself is too stately.

After *Devi*, the freshest and most inspired work in this quartet is *Two Daughters*. This anthology film was called *Three Daughters* (or *Teen Kanya*) before one segment was cut for export (either because of the film's length—roughly three hours—or because the director could not meet the deadline to subtitle a full version; stories vary). It's not yet clear whether Merchant's American-release prints will contain all three segments. But what Ray's biographer, Andrew Robinson, has said of the triptych—"If I were forced to pick only one work by Ray to show to someone unfamiliar with him, it would have to be *Three Daughters*"—could apply to the movie in its diptych form. Watching Ray's renderings of two (or three) Tagore stories, those unfamiliar with his movies can find the humorous, bittersweet lyricism of a rural classic like *Pather Panchali*, the understanding of sexual politics which flowered in *The Home and the World*, Ray's take on mother-son relationships (parts of *Three Daughters* are like the tragic portions of *Aparajito* and *The World of Apu* reinterpreted as farce), and the instinctual, tragicomic handling of half-formed men which centers the Apu trilogy, the socially conscious *The Adversary*, the contemporary romantic comedy *Days and Nights in the Forest*, and even Ray's philosophical valedictory *The Stranger* (1991), a winsome comedy that at this writing has yet to find a U.S. distributor.

THREE Daughters also epitomizes Ray's Chekhovian quality—his ability to suffuse the most awkward and "ordinary" lives with the potency of art without violating their integrity. It's tempting to call "The Postmaster"—the first episode—a perfect movie. But calling a work of art perfect can suggest that it is finished to death, and "The Postmaster" bursts with ungovernable vitality and wit. It's set in a tiny village where an educated Calcuttan has taken the job of

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***Details: a room design for* The Chess Players**

postmaster. This young man, Nandalal (Anil Chatterjee), encourages his housekeeper, Ratan (Chandana Banerjee), a pre-adolescent orphan, to see herself as a kid sister to him. He begins teaching her to read and write; she struggles to meet his standards (she starts to wash her own clothes regularly) and waits on him without wavering, even when he contracts malaria. But Nandalal gets fed up with village life and resigns his post. In the last few shots he begins his trip home as Ratan fetches water for her next master. Within the confines of this chapati-thin slice of life, Ray explores two approaches to living—the postmaster's, relatively cultured and based on self-gratification (though not necessarily self-fulfillment), and the girl's, stoic and dutiful (but not joyous or satisfying).

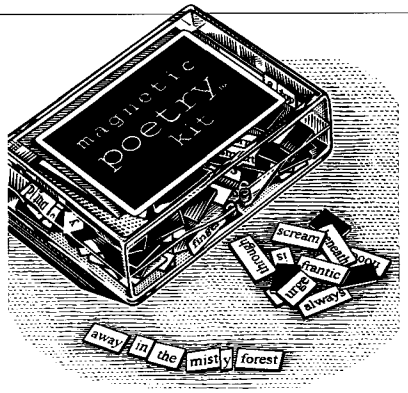
After seeing De Sica's *The Bicycle Thief*, Ray wrote a friend,

> The conventional approach tells you that the best way to tell a story is to leave out all except those elements which are directly related to the story, while the master's work clearly indicates that if your theme is strong and simple, then you can include a hundred little apparently irrelevant details which, instead of obscuring the theme, only help to intensify it by contrast, and in addition create the illusion of actuality better.

"The Postmaster" has at least "a hundred little apparently irrelevant details," every one expressive. From the changing of the guard that begins the story—with the outgoing postman using what looks like a religious painting to help him preach the use of quinine to ward off malaria—Ray defines, in sharp, ticklish brushstrokes, both the country girl's modesty and reticence and the city man's queasiness and softness.

The village madman is a visual as well as a comedic marvel. A bristle-haired scarecrow with a wild stare, he's something out of a shipwreck movie; he squats accusatorily, his fishing rod lying in the road like a flattened plant. When the postmaster first sees him, Ray conjures an intimate slapstick portrait—Nandalal's cigarette falls out of his mouth and he drops his match as the raggedy man watches him smoke. The laughter that results is a tribute to Chatterjee's—and Ray's—comic timing *and* to the connection Ray makes between the audience and Nandalal. Suddenly we're all strangers in a strange land. When Ratan shoos the madman away with the quiet threat "Do you know how strong my master is?" it's a crystalline comic coup—besides a grasp of the situation, she displays how much strength she will lend Nandalal and how much her job instills in her. It's also a painfully ironic moment: Ratan is repeating something the outgoing postmaster told *her* so that she would obey Nandalal.

Who hasn't experienced the kind of temporary union and leave-taking that the postmaster and his ward go through in this story? Middle-class life has shallow roots, whether in America or in India: what could be more typical for a college graduate than to take a job in a different culture or environment and later return home—or maybe move farther off, to a better or more congenial job? Ray's art is rich because it concentrates on the conjunctions rather than the clashes between opposing characters. Nothing could be simpler on paper than the postmaster's passage from being a naive aspiring writer who believes that his poetry will bloom in rural solitude to being the disillusioned soul who decides that he must return to Calcutta. What is surprising is that the audience feels a sense of loss when he does return—because Ray



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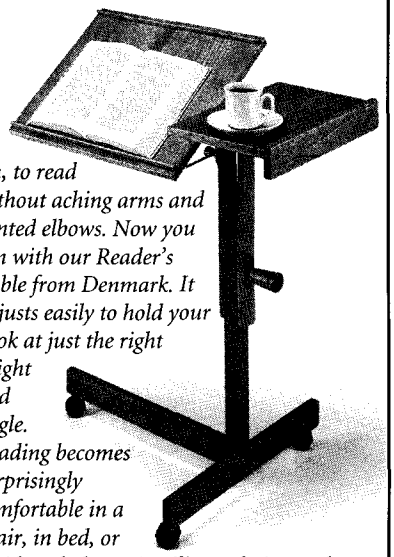

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suggests that by staying in town and nurturing Ratan, or by taking her with him to Calcutta, he could have achieved a profound self-transformation, becoming empathic and confident. At the end Ratan is the graver, wiser character. When she ignores Nandalal on the road as he hastens home, and spurns his offer of a tip, the act of cutting him registers, in its own nonromantic, nonsexual way, as strongly as Valli's silent, eyes-ahead rejection of Joseph Cotten at the end of *The Third Man*. When Ray's camera takes one last look at a hurt, ruminative Nandalal, we discern that this director doesn't sell anyone short—Ratan's brushing him off may smarten him up.

THESE days zealots of every stripe treat cultural cross-pollenization as mongrelization. Ray's achievement rested on moviemaking artistry that was as universal as music. In an intelligent, rueful overview in the Spring, 1993, *American Scholar*, Chandak Sengoopta supports Ray's belief that his marriage of Eastern and Western art could be appreciated (in Ray's words) "only by someone who has his feet in both cultures. Someone who will bring to bear on the films involvement and detachment in equal measures. Someone who will see both the wood and the trees." But Ray did his work more effectively than he (or Sengoopta) might have realized. One of the most intense and emotional moviegoing experiences I've had was watching *The Home and the World* at a small Greenwich Village theater. Based on a Tagore novel, the film concerns such alien issues as purdah (India's traditional cordoning-off of women) and the turn-of-the-century Indian nationalist movement, *swadeshi*, which called for banning British goods and increasing native productivity. Nevertheless, Ray succeeded in involving the audience so intimately that there was a rustle in the theater when one viewer whispered that the *swadeshi* leader was sipping from an English teacup. In *Our Films, Their Films*, Ray confessed that his love for movies turned "serious" when he began studying Hollywood directors to determine the way "Ford [was] different from Wyler, or Wyler from Capra, or Capra from Stevens." Americans may rediscover in the work of this Indian master the deepest roots of their own art.

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The Other Washington

The city of Marion Barry, who should be beyond political redemption

by Randall Kennedy

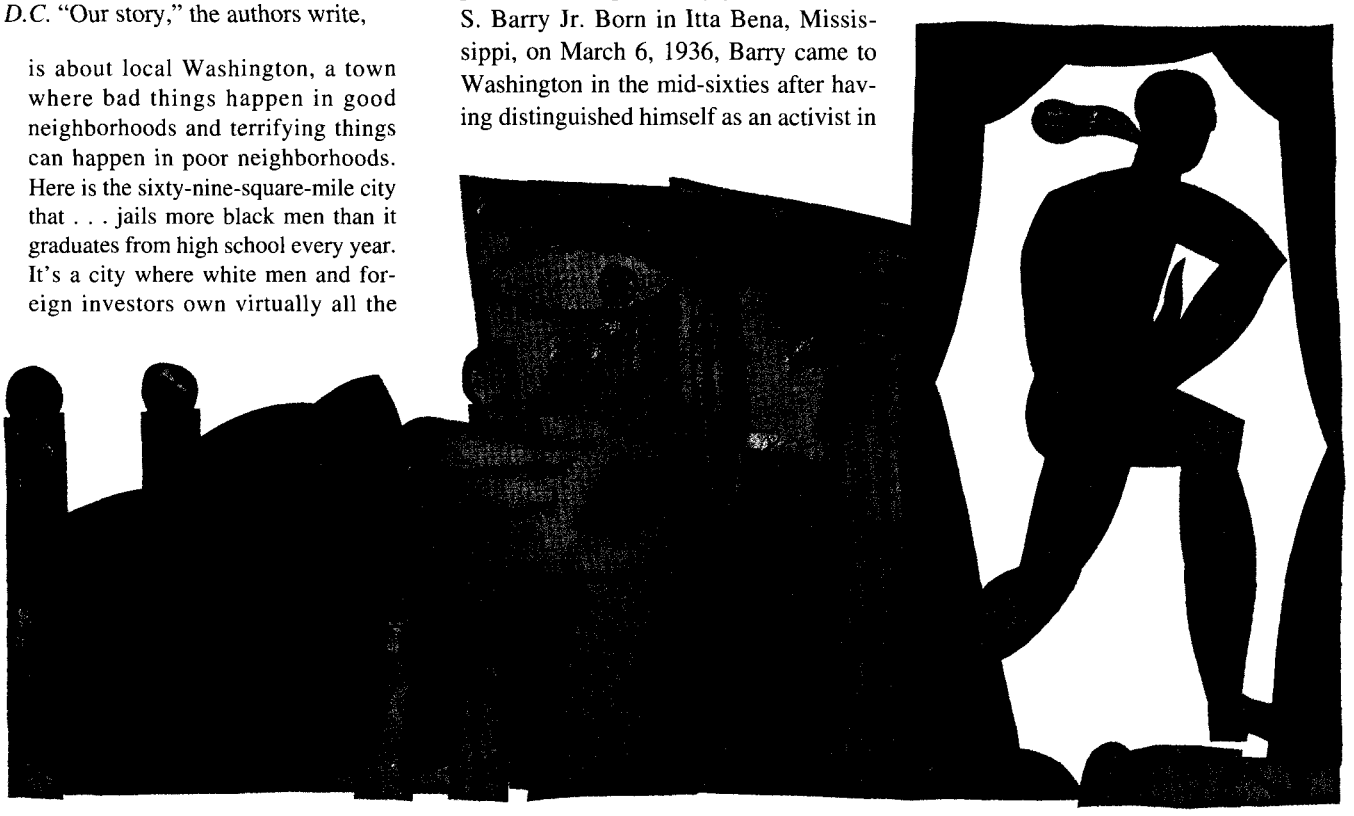
DREAM CITY: RACE, POWER, AND THE DECLINE OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

by Harry S. Jaffe and Tom Sherwood. Simon & Schuster, 352 pages, $24.00.

THE recent history of African-Americans in Washington, D.C., is a story of impressive achievements on the one hand and frustrating failures on the other. The failures are better known and more accessible. It should come as no surprise, then, that deterioration, corruption, and incompetence are the watchwords of *Dream City: Race, Power, and the Decline of Washington, D.C.* "Our story," the authors write,

> is about local Washington, a town where bad things happen in good neighborhoods and terrifying things can happen in poor neighborhoods. Here is the sixty-nine-square-mile city that . . . jails more black men than it graduates from high school every year. It's a city where white men and foreign investors own virtually all the commercial real estate, though 70 percent of the population is African-American; where black babies die at rates higher than in any other American city . . . ; where the rate of AIDS cases among children is rising faster than in any other place in the nation; where a small deer herd thrives in Rock Creek National Park while a half-mile east of the forest young black gangs prey on one another and where the murder rate from 1989 to 1991 made the city the country's killing capital.

Jaffe and Sherwood explain and dramatize the development of this ugly, despairing cityscape by chronicling the career, especially the fall, of Washington's most significant and notorious local politico of the past thirty years—Marion S. Barry Jr. Born in Itta Bena, Mississippi, on March 6, 1936, Barry came to Washington in the mid-sixties after having distinguished himself as an activist in the civil-rights movement. He had served as the first chairman of the now-legendary Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). When Barry arrived, few outlets existed for conventional local politics. City commissioners appointed by the President administered the District under the watchful eyes and intrusive thumbs of openly racist white southern congressmen. So Barry skirted conventional politics, marketing himself as a defiant agitator, a champion of "the people" who loudly challenged the Washington establishment. He orchestrated protests against police brutality, boycotted what was widely perceived as an exploitative local transit system, and helped to found Pride, Incorporated, a hybrid job-training, anti-poverty, social-protest organiza-



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tion that became his first solid institutional base within the city. Barry took risks and paid dues, including that special rite of dues-paying prevalent among the major black political figures of this century: arrest, rough treatment by the police, and jail. Nothing helped Marion Barry's career more than his arrests—particularly the one for jaywalking, which turned into a brawl with the police while a crowd looked on. One of the reasons Barry remains popular in certain quarters today is that some Washingtonians continue to feel a stubborn gratitude and admiration for what he did in the sixties.

When limited home rule was gradually extended to the District, beginning in 1968, enabling residents to vote for their school board, city council, and mayor, Barry moved into electoral politics and climbed speedily to the top. He won a seat on the school board in 1971 and a seat on the city council in 1974, and in 1978 he campaigned for mayor. In the Democratic primary he was the underdog challenging older, more-established figures: the incumbent, Walter Washington, the District's first mayor, and Sterling Tucker, the sitting chairman of the city council. Although both were more popular than Barry among the city's black electorate, they split the black vote. White liberals, following or perhaps only mirroring the endorsement given to Barry by *The Washington Post*, tipped the primary to the younger man. Barry won by only 1,500 votes. (The general election, in a city with few Republicans, was a landslide.) In subsequent elections, in 1982 and 1986, he won the Democratic primaries by increasingly large margins, building a formidable political machine. By the end of the 1980s Barry was so firmly entrenched in power that Washingtonians referred to him—some with horror and some with admiration—as the city's "mayor for life."

Like many such predictions, however, this one rapidly turned sour. By Barry's second term the high hopes created by his ascension to office had been deflated by a continuation of the incompetence and corruption in city government that had prompted many voters to support Barry in the first place. By his third term he was giving the journalist Jason DeParle good reason to condemn his administration as "the worst city government in America." By then he was also the target of several federal probes into alleged wrongdoing, including corruption, interference with the administration of justice, and the illegal use of drugs. Prosecutors succeeded in nabbing several of Barry's close associates. A deputy mayor, Ivanhoe Donaldson, was sent to prison for embezzling city funds. Barry's former wife Mary Treadwell was sent to prison for embezzling money from Pride (Barry installed her in a position on the District's parole board after she served her time). And one of his mistresses, Karen Johnson, served time in prison for refusing to testify before a grand jury about sales of drugs she reputedly made to the mayor. Yet Barry himself, though tarnished by his obvious entanglement with criminality, repeatedly managed to escape indictment. Then, on January 18, 1990, Barry was videotaped smoking cocaine with Rasheeda Moore, another of his mistresses, in an FBI-police sting operation. This indiscretion forced him to decline to run for re-election and earned him a six-month prison term.

In Jaffe and Sherwood's portrayal of Barry's career, two subjects stand out. One is Barry's sordid, undisciplined personal life—particularly his exploitative and deceitful sexual relationships with women and his use of illicit drugs—and the ways in which this infected his public persona. The other is his success in playing the race card with various constituencies.

With respect to the first subject, Jaffe and Sherwood emphasize that Barry's personal sleaziness long antedated the videotaped drug-saturated extramarital romp with Moore. It would seem that he simply deserted his first wife in 1964. That same year a female civil-rights activist accused him of sexual assault. Although there appears to have been no definitive resolution of that charge, Jaffe and Sherwood quote John Lewis (then a leader of SNCC, now a congressman from Georgia) recalling that Barry "knocked women around." Subsequently Barry married thrice more and carried on sexual liaisons with scores of women, some of whom claim to have sold him drugs. Various incidents seeped messily into public view. For instance, Karen Johnson, one of the mistresses who Jaffe and Sherwood say supplied Barry with cocaine, kept a personal diary in which she described her relationship with the may-

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or—notations that fell into the hands of reporters as well as the FBI.

No relationship necessarily exists between personal and public conduct; the list of greats includes many whose private lives were scandalous. But Barry's private and public vices mirrored each other: his sexual infidelities and abuse of drugs mimicked his political infidelities and abuse of power. An angry lover's letter to Barry, stored improbably in the archives of SNCC, expresses the sense of defilement that many of his political supporters have also come to feel. The woman wrote that she regretted ever having allowed him to put his "filthy" hands on her, because "you use people, take advantage of them and never give one thought that you might be destroying them in the process . . . you have betrayed my trust and dishonored me."

The people who have the most right to feel this way toward Barry are the poor, working-class, and lower-middle-class black residents of Washington, the neglected people to whom he promised a better deal. They should feel betrayed because, contrary to what Barry led them to believe, he did not institute a populist municipal government dedicated to serving those most in need. Instead he instituted a municipal government whose rhetoric was populist but whose actions systematically favored white commercial interests and black bureaucrats and entrepreneurs who zealously demanded their cut of the city's budget regardless of the cost to the citizenry as a whole. During Barry's tenure and with his active encouragement the District gave sweetheart deals to white businessmen, deals that cost it millions in forgone and desperately needed revenue. And in the guise of advancing black power Barry funneled lucrative municipal accounts to minority contractors (many of whom were his cronies) who then, all too often, supplied Washington residents with inferior goods and services at high prices. Jaffe and Sherwood report, for instance, that prior to Barry's tenure the public schools bought cornflakes for $8 a carton. After his ascension to power the city changed suppliers on racial grounds, a reform that raised the cost of cornflakes to $13.50 a carton and that amounted, to paraphrase the superintendent of schools, to taking food out of a black kid's stomach so that some black dude could get rich.

A few commentators in the 1960s warned that the imagery of black power was likely to be appropriated by political hucksters in the cities who would assuage the black masses with empty rhetoric, coopt the black middle class with "porkchop nationalism" (small slices of setasides, quotas, and other sorts of preferential treatment), and maintain a welcoming (though inequitable) environment for white-dominated business enterprise. As Jaffe and Sherwood indicate, Marion Barry's administration of Washington provides considerable substantiation for this thesis.

Dream City displays important virtues. It brings together in one place a comprehensive and detailed listing of Barry's actual and rumored moral, political, and legal crimes. But fortunately it does more. Animated by outrage at Barry's multitudinous defaults, Jaffe and Sherwood also create a larger context in which to understand his career, a context shaped to a great extent by white racism. Jaffe and Sherwood remind us how recently it was that white racism of the most blatant sort permeated the Washington establishment, creating the bone-deep grievances, resentment, and paranoia that continue to prompt some black Washingtonians to defend Barry despite all his apparent failings. They recall, for example, the way that segregationist politicians such as Senator Theodore Bilbo, of Mississippi, and Representative John McMillan, of South Carolina, contemptuously administered the District from Capitol Hill, repeatedly insulting its black population.

Dream City, however, is also deeply flawed. A book that rails against the low standards of our political life should maintain higher standards of intellectual and journalistic rigor than this one exhibits. For one thing, it is all too conventional. *Dream City* rarely pursues an avenue of inquiry that has not already been extensively explored, and rarely tests assumptions that are popular among political journalists. Jaffe and Sherwood repeatedly assert, for instance, that the endorsement of *The Washington Post* was decisive in certain District elections. This assumption is certainly plausible. But a truly distinguished inquiry would go beyond restating conventional though unproven claims, in an effort to chart with more care and specificity the dy-

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namics of power in Washington. More important, one should expect of political journalists who hope to be taken seriously a hardheaded punctiliousness with respect to facts. That degree of care is not always evident in *Dream City*. Jaffe and Sherwood report as fact the allegation that Barry sexually harassed his deputy mayor Carol Thompson. Indeed, they report as facts virtually all of the many other allegations that have been made against him, including the claim that he raped a woman during a trip to the Virgin Islands. Unfortunately, Jaffe and Sherwood sometimes fail to detail the sources for these allegations. And when they do detail them, they sometimes fail to provide guidance for assessing the credibility of the accusers. Perhaps Barry is guilty of all the wrongdoing with which he is charged; his record makes this depressing possibility all too believable. Still, the distinction between allegations and facts is one worth preserving and one that Jaffe and Sherwood do too little to protect.

One encounters many jolting quotations in *Dream City*. On one occasion Mary Treadwell, Barry's second wife, is quoted as saying to a friend, "I'm just going to blow his dick off. It will save us all a lot of trouble." On another occasion she is quoted as saying to her philandering husband, "Nigger, I'm tired of this shit. I'm gonna blow your fucking brains out." Jaffe and Sherwood portray these bits of intimate colloquy as if they themselves were present when the words were spoken. But of course they were not. These statements were relayed to them by people whom they never directly identify and whose credibility is uncertain. Were these accurate renditions, offered near the time the quoted statements were made? Or were they the exaggerated recollections of people attempting to give eager reporters some exciting, quotable lines? Jaffe and Sherwood's sketchy and confusing "Source Notes" notwithstanding, there is reason to suspect that the latter is the reality.

There are, moreover, deeper flaws in the book. For one thing, the authors attribute too much influence to Barry. His failures did undoubtedly exert downward pressure on Washington's fortunes. But urban America as a whole has been in the grip of multiple crises over the past thirty years, and thus there may have been forces other than Marion Barry's sins at

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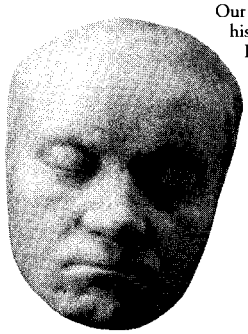

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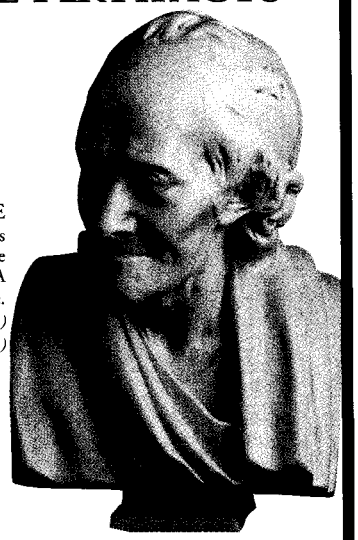

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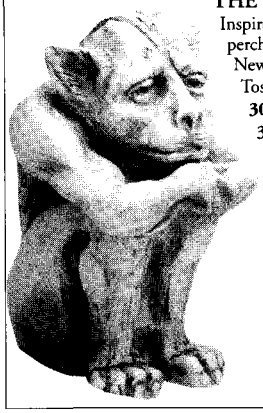

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work in the difficulties that have besieged the District. Yet Jaffe and Sherwood fail to investigate the contribution that such forces may have made to Washington's agony. Over the past few years numerous books and articles have been written about racial politics and administrative performance in a variety of cities. For instance, Gary Orfield and Carole Ashkinaze published *The Closing Door: Conservative Policy and Black Opportunity*, detailing what they perceived as Atlanta's deterioration during the tenure of Mayor Andrew Young. It would have been useful for Jaffe and Sherwood to compare Barry's policies and priorities with those of Young and other mayors. Such comparisons would have given more depth to their analysis. As it stands now, for all the condemnation that Jaffe and Sherwood rightly heap upon Barry, they offer no systematic way to measure his performance against that of his mayoral peers. His administration was certainly bad. But how bad? The answer would require considerably more research than Jaffe and Sherwood appear to have done.

Finally, while Jaffe and Sherwood illuminate large areas of Washington political culture, they neglect certain puzzling features having to do with race and the exercise of power in the District. One is the presence of David Clarke, a white man who has long served as a leader on the District city council. Given Jaffe and Sherwood's fascination with "racism and racial insecurities" in Washington, which they view as the "single undercurrent" that binds the city's disparate parts, and given the strong, long-term backing Clarke has received from blacks (he is currently the chairman of the city council), it is disappointing that they have so little to say about Clarke's relationship to the District's racial politics. More important, Jaffe and Sherwood largely ignore the manifestations and dynamics of black Washingtonians who have achieved success and influence apart from the Barry administrations. This is ironic, since they chide *The Washington Post* (or, at least, the *Post* of the 1970s) for neglecting what they describe as Washington's "vibrant black social, academic, business, and professional life." This side of District black society rarely surfaces in *Dream City*. Like many chroniclers of black social pathology, Jaffe and Sher-

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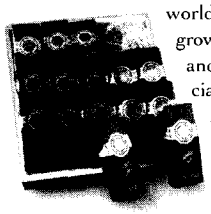

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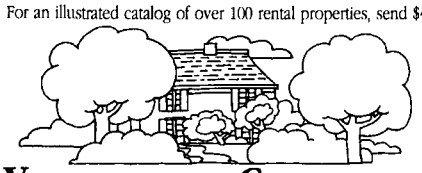

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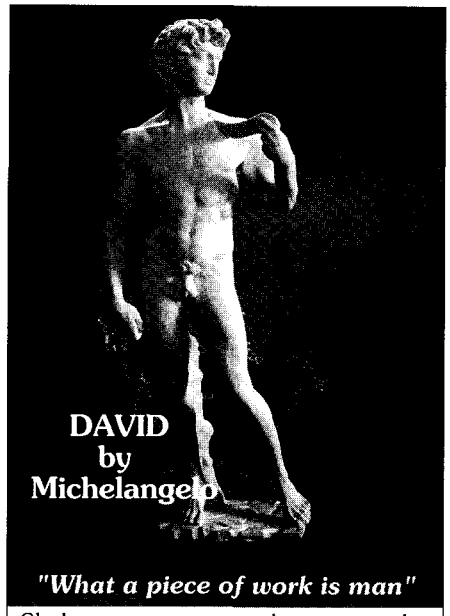

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wood show little familiarity with the careers, beliefs, habits, and aspirations of highly accomplished blacks. Such people live throughout the District but are especially noticeable in the upper-northwest neighborhoods of the city—Takoma Park, Shepherd Park, North Portal Estates. In these areas, on block after lovingly tended block, one encounters skilled, disciplined, conscientious, independent, and productive black people who are second to none in terms of their self-imposed standards of honesty, dignity, and diligence—people who span a wide range of occupations, from teachers, postal employees, and sanitation workers to journalists such as Juan Williams and William Raspberry, of *The Washington Post*, physicians such as William Matory and Charles Epps Jr., of the Howard University Hospital, and attorneys such as Karen Hastie Williams, a partner at Crowell & Moring, and Wesley Williams Jr., Karen's husband, a partner at Covington & Burling. Often commentators on District life and manners who are well schooled in rates of illegitimacy and Marion Barry's many shameful gaffes are largely unaware of the sources of inspiration, canniness, and strength that enable a good many black Washingtonians to evade or overcome the racial pitfalls that confront them along with the general obstacles that confront us all.

The triumphs of individual blacks are often related to at least some of the failures that burden black communities. Success in breaching "white" institutions that were heretofore racially closed has certainly enlarged the opportunities available to those African-Americans equipped to take advantage of them. On the other hand, success for black individuals has in certain ways eroded the vibrancy and solidarity of black communal institutions. Howard may still be the apex of the historically black colleges, but now many of the best black students and professors prefer historically white colleges. Children who would previously have attended the public schools of the District of Columbia—the children of the most affluent, energetic, and knowledgeable blacks—now attend Sidwell Friends, St. Albans, or other predominantly white private schools, depriving the predominantly black public schools of precious human capital. Political institutions such as

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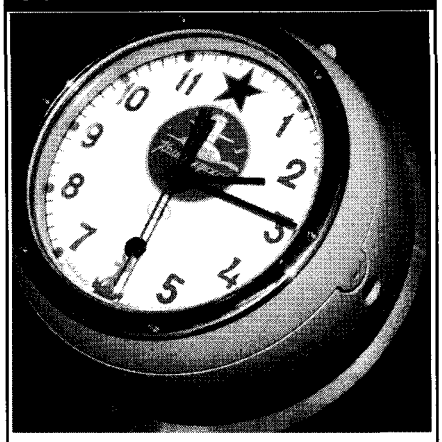

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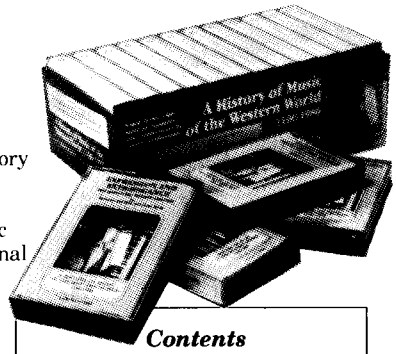

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the city council, the school board, and the mayor's office (one might also add the NAACP and the Urban League) still attract some ambitious upper- and middle-class blacks. But increased opportunities in other, heretofore inaccessible spheres of endeavor have led to a diminution of the pool of talented blacks committed primarily to politics (or racial uplift). Just as politics often fails to attract the best and the brightest in American society at large, so does politics frequently fail to attract the best and the brightest blacks, even (or perhaps especially) in predominantly African-American cities that have urgent need of sound, inventive, and courageous civic leadership. Thus we find the home of perhaps the country's most concentrated, influential, and talented cadre of upper- and middle-class black residents, Washington, D.C., governed by a bevy of second-rate politicos.

This brings us to the morbidly fascinating story of the political resuscitation of Marion Barry. Soon after serving his six months in prison he returned to Washington and won a seat on the city council from the District's poorest ward—Ward Eight. Now he is running a strong race to reclaim the mayor's office. Whether or not he wins, Barry will clearly remain a large presence in Washington politics for years to come. This is owing in part to his willingness and ability to portray himself as a victim of white racism. Like Clarence Thomas, Barry touched the most sensitive wounds of African-American racial memory by accusing his accusers of trying to "lynch" him. And like Thomas, Barry succeeded in eliciting a defensive, reflexive racial solidarity, which prompted some members of the jury at his trial to nullify the most serious charges against him (despite clear evidence of his guilt) and which moves many to vote for him for no other reason than to stick it to "them"—white people.

Another reason for Barry's appeal is precisely that he has been found guilty of criminal wrongdoing and sent to jail because of it—an experience shared by many of his constituents and by people whom they know and love. Barry is turning his disgrace into a virtue by claiming that his fall from power to the penitentiary gives him something that his competitors lack—firsthand knowledge of and insight into the problems of the black poor. He can serve, as well, as an object lesson

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demonstrating that despite missteps and failures a person can rehabilitate himself. The virtue of forgiveness and the possibility of redemption are the twin themes animating his election campaign. "Who can better help [Washington] recover," Barry asks, "than someone who himself has gone through recovery?"

Nothing would be more elevating than to witness the redemption of a fallen but reformed politician by a thoughtful and forgiving community. But that is not what is happening in the District. Barry has shown no authentic sense of shame or sorrow or repentance. Instead he has skillfully exploited every vulnerability he can find—resentment, desperation, hurt pride, naiveté, ignorance, a desire to forgive, a lingering sense of gratitude—in order to evade responsibility and regain power. Sadly, Jaffe and Sherwood are correct when they observe that "Marion Barry, like the problem of race in America, won't go away."

BRIEF REVIEWS

None to Accompany Me

by Nadine Gordimer. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 324 pages, $22.00.

Ms. Gordimer's latest novel is so contemporary that it verges on the prophetic. Her principal characters are a white woman lawyer who has worked for years in behalf of Africans seeking housing and land rights and a black couple whose anti-apartheid activities have entailed years of exile and considerable danger. These people are far from paper-doll symbols of South African society. They carry the three-dimensional impedimenta of temperaments, tastes, old loves, new entanglements, embarrassing relatives, and transport problems. They are real inhabitants of a real country that is rapidly changing and requires them to change as well. Thanks to their life on the run, the black couple have come home as multilingual international sophisticates who may or may not find appropriate places in the indigenous government they have struggled to establish. The lawyer can continue working to find living space for Africans, but the rules have changed, and she cannot be certain that her services will still be desired, although the housing situation will clearly be dire for years to come. Her bright and charming African assistant, provided with an apartment in a building previously inhabited solely by middle-class whites, soon has friends and connections sleeping on the floors, and his situation is typical. One cannot turn away homeless brothers. Meanwhile, the superficially simple leader of a band of squatters proves to be an adroit organizer and negotiator, and rises like cream. Ms. Gordimer writes, as usual, with extraordinary clarity and intelligence, an infallible eye for illuminating detail, and a comprehensive understanding of the balance that people in a shifting society must maintain between public action and private inclination.

Hidden Cities

by Roger G. Kennedy. The Free Press, 372 pages, $24.95.

The author is the director of the National Park Service and a former director of the American History Museum at the Smithsonian Institution. He therefore knows a great deal about early American buildings, meaning any large, organized constructions—which in the case of native North American civilizations were earth mounds and stoneworks. He knows where these works of pre-Columbian Americans were, where they survive, and how they have been dated in relation to Egyptian pyramids and Roman arches,

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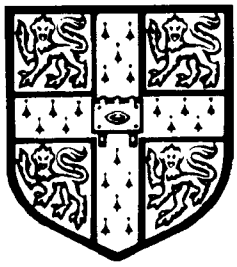

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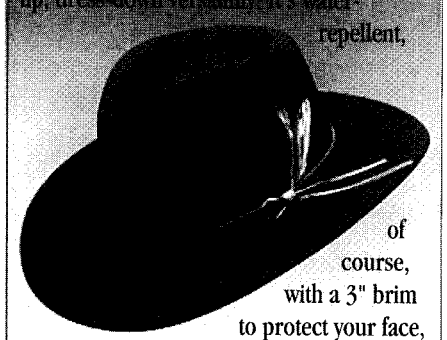

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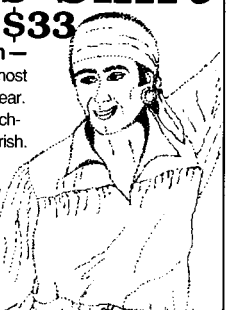

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and he offers plausible if admittedly unprovable theories on the purposes they served. Any reader with an interest in history or archaeology will share his distress over the destruction of so many of the structures and develop a wish to see some of those that remain. Mr. Kennedy also knows a great deal about the Europeans who made the frontier history that obliterated so much Native American history, and those Europeans were a gaudy and frequently devious lot, several of whom deserve to be the anti-heroes of historical novels, preferably by George MacDonald Fraser. Mr. Kennedy's text leaps from place to place and from past to present with small regard for logical continuity, but it is consistently rewarding.

The Journalist

by Harry Mathews.
Godine, 256 pages, $21.95.

The narrator of this novel has been the victim either of misdiagnosis or of mischosen therapy. As the result of a never-specified episode, he has been advised to keep a journal. The exercise is intended, one gathers, to keep him anchored to practical reality through the practice of precise observation. He begins, harmlessly and rather tiresomely, with items like his colleagues' shoes, but soon becomes obsessed with categories and interpretations, the former increasingly intricate and the latter increasingly disturbing. The fellow is daft, and the projected remedy is making him dafter, but because the journalist himself is not an appealing character, the chief interest of the novel (aside from the author's neat prose style) becomes the question of how Mr. Mathews will resolve the clever muddle he has devised. He does not provide a solution equal to the ingenuity of the problem.

Corelli's Mandolin

by Louis de Bernières. Pantheon, 448 pages, $24.00.

Mr. de Bernières has abandoned the vague time and imaginary country of his earlier novels for a real place, the island of Cephallonia, and a definite time—the Second World War to the present. There are, alas, no more magical cats or resurrected conquistadores. There remain, however, eccentric and larger-than-life characters, scenes of bloody horror and grotesque

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Farrar, Straus and Giroux,
421 pages, $30.00.

Mr. Clark, an MP from the safely Conservative constituency of Plymouth, served as Minister of Trade (1986–1989) and Minister of State in the Ministry of Defence (1989–1992). He kept a private diary throughout the period, and to describe it as indiscreet would be an understatement. He confides after a garbled telephone call that "our special highpower secret-agent type portables are defeated by the Scottish Highlands and don't work north of Inverness." In Scotland was one of the properties among which Mr. Clark peregrinated, the others being a toehold in London, a Kentish castle stubbornly in need of repairs, and the equivalent of Cole Porter's "silly little chalet in the Interlaken Valley." He also held property on, or abutting, the English end of the Chunnel, a fact mentioned only because it enabled him to evade a dull assignment by pleading a possible conflict of interest. He maintained a lecherous interest in pretty women, preferably under age twenty-five, and a mild addiction to art galleries. How he managed to attend to Parliament and his various duties is a mystery, but evidently he did, for he reports innumerable far-flung trade conferences at which jargon-spouting officials discussed pointless matters and there was never time to visit the loo. He explains how civil servants inconvenience their bosses and how officials of middle rank prevent those of lower rank from gaining credit with those of highest rank. What he describes of actual political activity consists largely of small dinners at which Old School Ties exchange gossip (did the Lady smile at Thingumbob's joke?), estimate their chances for advancement, and plot discomfort for

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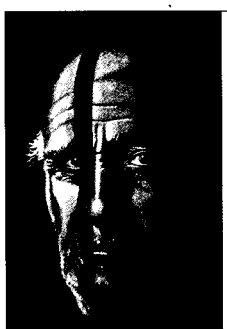

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their enemies. It is all deplorably trivial and irresistibly funny, for Mr. Clark writes with spirit even when he laments. Christmas Eve, 1987:

> Ash, ash, all is ash. Lay not up for thyself treasures on earth. The cars are all getting streaked and rust spotted, the books foxed, the furniture dusty. The window panes, all 52,000 of them are *revolting*. . . . Translucent only. And there is moth everywhere. My grandfather's great Rothschild coat, bought in Wien in 1906, is terminally degraded . . . The whole thing is out of control.
>
> And why? I know why. Because I'm not rich enough to have servants.

All in all, Mr. Clark's diary suggests that one is hearing the uninhibited conversation of a character out of Saki—and there is no reason to interrupt the entertainment.

Jacob Lawrence: The Migration Series

edited by Elizabeth Button Turner. The Rappahannock Press in association with The Phillips Collection, 175 pages, $25.00.

Jacob Lawrence's migration series—paintings depicting the move of southern blacks to the North—is not normally to be seen in its entirety, being divided between the Museum of Modern Art, in New York, and The Phillips Collection, in Washington. The young artist (he was twenty-three) had hoped to keep his history of his people intact, but settled for the even division and a price that was, even in 1941, absurdly low. The current publication presents all the elegantly balanced, deceptively simple, powerfully moving paintings with the painter's terse captions. The text, by various experts, is largely superfluous except for one sentence by Jeffrey C. Stewart: "What Lawrence did was create a text that incorporated history, sociology, and a kind of poetry in a visual narrative that broke out of the typical categories of modern art."

The Tribe of Tiger: Cats and Their Culture

by Elizabeth Marshall Thomas. Simon & Schuster, 240 pages, $20.00.

A portion of this book first appeared in *The Atlantic.*

—by Phoebe-Lou Adams

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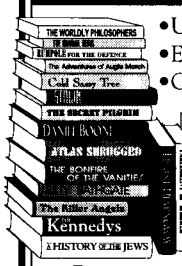
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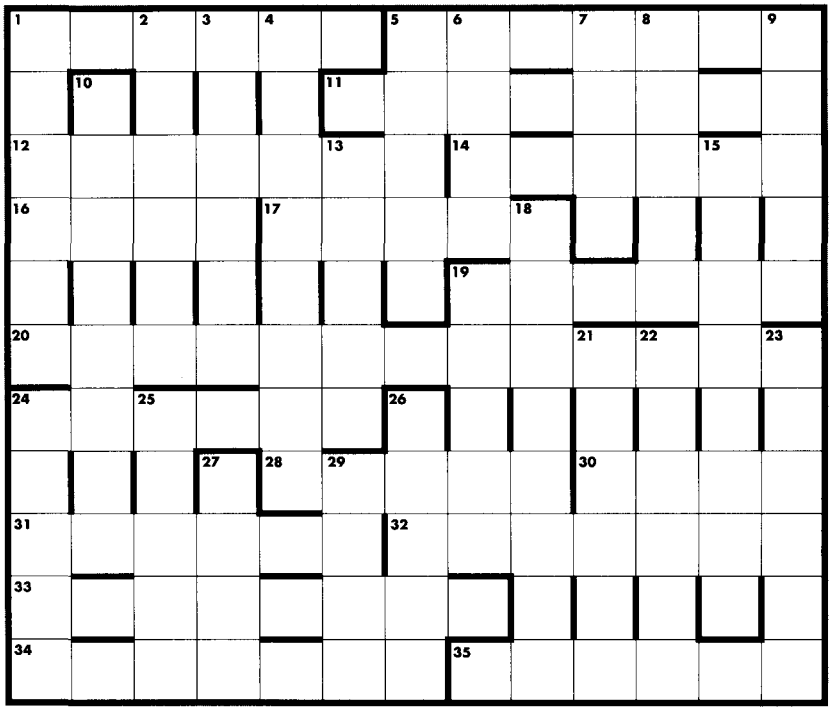
THE PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

Changing Times

Answers to ten unidentified clues will be 20 Across upon entry in the diagram. Clue answers include eight proper nouns and a possibly unfamiliar word at 33A.



See page 111 for Puzzler contest details. The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 130.

Across

1. Bumped into a French lady briefly stuck in road (6)
5. Violation by one from a Black Sea region (7)
11. Someone forgiving mate accepts ring (8)
12. Trusts wagon trains (7)
14. Having broken leg, Don ached (6)
16. Run behind South American palm tree (4)
17. Spreads cheer with bagels (5)
19. Andy's kid taking a last taste of illicit drug (6)
24. Keeping close to the ground, G-man ran (6)
28. Paper showing woman with alien (5)
30. Think Kitty's cries can be heard (4)
31. In running first of races, get gray pony's kin (6)
32. Michigan prisoners given medial terms with very short lengths (7)
33. Man just scattered about 100 jungle deer (8)
34. Guard has ID taken back (7)
35. Ford most of the way into river, a large body of water (6) (*two words*)

Down

1. Most certain of the first third of summer vacation (6)
2. Hungry after a little bit of mush that's inadequate (6)
3. Cheese stuffing from a noodle (6)
4. Record that is in use adapted for tributes (8)
5. Supply food and cold beverage after work (5)
6. Mythic vessel guarded by gargoyles (4)
7. Form furry growth (4)
8. Doctor cuts into a Hindu god (5)
9. Irene: strange name for a boy (5)
10. Raul's wound is around top of the shoulder (8)
13. Dash ahead of 500 antelope (5)
15. Argument resolved about a story (8)
18. Doctor overtips, for fun (8)
19. Area of a nuclear reactor involving Homer's primary task (5)
21. Ushered outside, a pair of males escaped (6)
22. Blames on exercises (6)
23. Anne is terribly mad (6)
24. Noted psychoanalyst starting with mother at the outset (5)
25. Operator called "Ape" (5)
26. Popular place to travel about between Maine and California (5)
27. Desired unlimited pay for playing (4)
29. Cap worn by English police (4)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

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WORD WATCH

by Anne H. Soukhanov

A selection of terms that have newly been coined, that have recently acquired new currency, or that have taken on new meanings, compiled by the executive editor of The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition.

freeman *noun,* a unit that measures the amount of plagiarism in a given text, which is determined by comparing 30-character strings in computer-scanned documents. One *freeman* equals 100 percent plagiarism. "The basic unit, one *freeman*. . . . is named after an individual whom [NIH researcher Walter Stewart] regards as having committed large-scale plagiarism" (*New York Times*). "Since being drawn into [another] case Stewart and [Dr. Ned] Feder have been feverishly feeding pages from both [plastic surgery] textbooks into Hewlett-Packard scanners. . . . They. . . found close correlations between a number of chapters, especially the two introductory chapters—which overlap to the tune of 568.856 *millifreemans*, meaning there is a 57% match" (*Science*).

BACKGROUND: This word has its genesis in a successful copyright-infringement suit filed in 1987 by Heidi Weissmann, a specialist in nuclear medicine at Yeshiva University's Albert Einstein College of Medicine, against Leonard M. Freeman, her section head. Weissmann charged that Freeman had represented as his own work an entire book chapter that she had written. The case attracted the attention of the NIH researchers referred to above, whose zealous efforts to expose scientific fraud, most recently by means of their computerized *plagiarism machine*, have grown increasingly controversial. *Freeman* joins a host of eponymous measurements: think of *amp* or *ampere* (a unit of electric current; after André Marie Ampère), *curie* (a unit of radioactivity; after Marie Curie), *hertz* (a unit of frequency; after Heinrich Rudolph Hertz), *newton* (a unit of force required to accelerate mass; after Sir Isaac Newton), *volt* (a unit of electric potential and electromotive force; after Count Alessandro Volta), and *watt* (a unit of electric power; after James Watt).

mad-dog *verb, slang,* to stare fixedly and coldly at (another), presumably as a challenge to fight: "'He would . . . *mad-dog* me and say names under his breath,' Mr. [Chris] Simmons [a 17-year-old African-American student at Palm Springs High School] said [of a Hispanic fellow student with whom he later had his first fight]. 'One day I got sick of it'" (*New York Times*).

BACKGROUND: The functional shift of *mad dog* from a noun compound (long used to denote a rabid canine and later to denote an insane person) to this hyphenated verb is in all likelihood the work of Los Angeles gangs. Perhaps the earliest print citation for it apears in *Do or Die*, a 1991 book by Leon Bing about the gangs. One of the characteristics of a rabid, or mad, dog is, of course, a fixed stare.

rug-ranking *noun,* a policy that assigns secretarial status and pay on the basis of the boss's stature rather than on the skills and responsibilities required for the job: "*Rug-ranking* bothers many advocates for women in the workplace . . . ; they find it altogether too reminiscent of the days when women were legally chattel and socially dependent" (*New York Times*).

BACKGROUND: *Rug-ranking*, which can be traced at least to 1990 in Canadian sources and can also mean classifying executives by their office furnishings and perks, made news last year in a press release written by N. Elizabeth Fried, about a study of secretarial ranking practices. Fried, a compensation consultant, used the term because it suggests that some secretaries are still treated as little more than their bosses' entitlements, like nice desks or rugs. It gained renewed notoriety this year in connection with a lawsuit filed by a former executive secretary at a television sports network who had been demoted, and was eventually fired, after her boss's demotion in a corporate restructuring. *Rug-ranking* joins a pair of other terms, both previously explored in this column, that similarly borrow from the physical makeup of an office to describe limitations in career advancement: *glass ceiling* and *sticky floor*.

urban yoga *noun,* a new form of exercise that mixes stress-relieving stretches with strenuous aerobics and muscle toning, set to music and intended to work every muscle in the body. Also called *power yoga* and, technically, *ashtanga yoga*. "The number of yoga classes being offered in gyms and health clubs is at an all-time high. Many carry decidedly unmystical names like *Urban Yoga* and *Power Yoga*" (*U.S. News & World Report*).

BACKGROUND: *Urban yoga* uses the poses of traditional hatha yoga, but has the practitioner perform them in rapid sequence. It is used to offset the effects of stress and hasten recovery from a heart attack; it also may be effective in treating chemical addictions and some obsessive-compulsive behaviors, because its practice can foster increased self-discipline. *Urban yoga* joins a number of similarly formed compounds, including *urban guerrilla*, *urban homesteading*, *urban renewal*, and *urban sprawl*.

Illustration by Michael C. Witte

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B. passenger room
C. safety features

A. a classic
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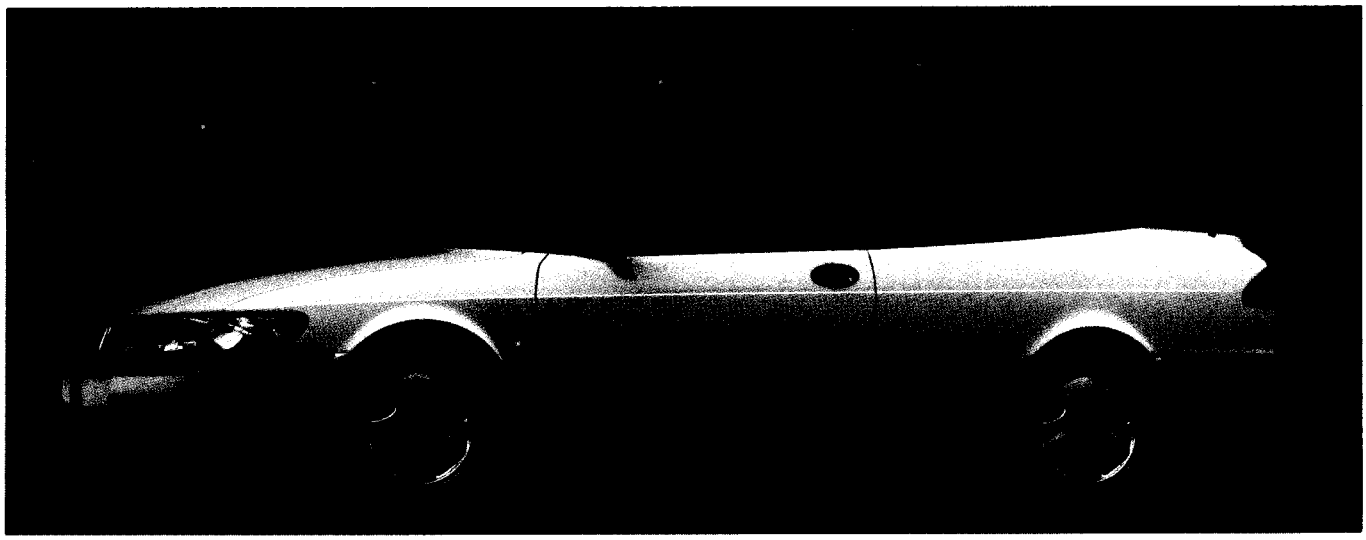

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